# NAPOLEON AND MARIE-LOUISE

## THE FALL OF THE EMPIRE

WALTER GEER

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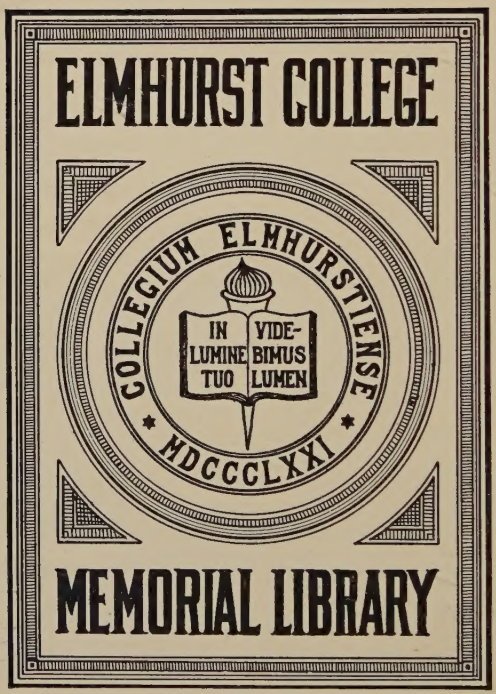
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NAPOLEON AND MARIE-LOUISE:
*The Fall of the Empire*

NAPOLEON AND JOSEPHINE:
*The Rise of the Empire*

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION:
*A Historical Sketch*

NAPOLEON THE FIRST:
*An Intimate Biography*

NAPOLEON THE THIRD:
*The Romance of an Emperor*

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE REVOLUTION AND EMPIRE
*Translated and adapted from the* Journal d'une femme de cinquante ans *by the Marquise de La Tour du Pin*

EMPRESS MARIE-LOUISE

# NAPOLEON AND MARIE-LOUISE

## THE FALL OF THE EMPIRE

BY

WALTER GEER

AUTHOR OF "NAPOLEON AND JOSEPHINE,"
"THE FRENCH REVOLUTION," "NAPOLEON THE FIRST," ETC.

*ILLUSTRATED*

*NEW YORK : BRENTANO'S*

*1925*

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# FOREWORD

THE history of Europe from 1807 to 1812, between Tilsit and Moscow, was dominated by the efforts of Napoleon to assure by a permanent peace with England the stability of his Empire and the repose of the world. To attain this end, the principal political means which he employed, at two decisive epochs in his career, were the Russian alliance and the Austrian marriage. From his headquarters in Poland, several weeks after Eylau, he wrote Talleyrand: "The tranquillity of Europe will never be established until France and Austria, or France and Russia, march together." At that time he had no system, but only an end in view: to conquer England, and thus assure a general peace. Of all the great Powers, Russia then seemed to him the best placed to aid him in this task — by her geographical position, and the immensity of her resources. If the entente established at Tilsit had been consolidated and perpetuated, it is probable that England would have given up the struggle, and that his object would have been attained. The rupture with Russia, to which the Austrian alliance directly led, revived the almost extinct coalition, drew Napoleon into disastrous enterprises, and ended in his downfall.

In a former volume, the legend of Joséphine was considered, and an attempt was made to substitute for it the truth of History. In the presence of the legend of Marie-Louise, the object is the same. For more than a century the Austrian Archduchess has been an object of detestation in France, and of contempt throughout the world. But we must remember that Marie-Louise was a German by birth and race, and that



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her stay in France was too short to enable her to change her tastes and her sympathies. She always felt herself an exile and a stranger in her adopted country.

Except as the consort of Napoleon, Marie-Louise has no historical interest, and it is only in her relations with him that she will be considered. Our theme is the Austrian marriage and its effect on the Russian alliance: these two events determined the fate of Napoleon.

WALTER GEER

NEW YORK,
October, 1925



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# NAPOLEON AND MARIE-LOUISE
# THE FALL OF THE EMPIRE

## CHAPTER ONE

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Napoleon's Revolutionary Heritage — All His Wars Defensive — The Treaty of Presburg — Confederation of the Rhine — Napoleon's Desire for Peace — The Campaign of Jena — The Polish Uprising — Napoleon's Attitude — Plan for a Buffer State — Austria Declines His Offers — The Czar's Overtures — Pozzo at Vienna — Battle of Eylau — Napoleon's Bulletin — Austria Suggests a Congress — Talleyrand Hopes for Peace — New Convention between Russia and Prussia — Victory of Friedland — Alexander Sues for Peace — Asks for an Interview

AFTER the failure of the royalist conspiracy of 1804, Napoleon uttered the memorable words: "They seek to destroy the Revolution by attacking my person: I will defend it, for I am the Revolution!" These were not words of vainglorious folly; they were only the sober truth, for in the person of Napoleon was incarnate the movement which we call the French Revolution.

All of the wars of Napoleon were essentially defensive in their character. The Revolution had gained the Alps and the left bank of the Rhine, the "natural frontiers" of France; but these frontiers did not assure safety from attack, and Napoleon was forced to extend them. To guard the passes of the Alps, he had to acquire Northern Italy; to hold the left bank of the Rhine, he had to go over to the right, to take more territory as a buffer in front of the Rhine frontier. In the course of time, this barrier also had to be protected by pushing French power onward —to the Elbe, the Oder, the Vistula, the Niemen, and finally to Moscow. It was his misfortune that he could never call a halt to the progress of his Empire. No sooner had he established a satisfactory frontier than he

was called on to defend it; and forced, after defeating his enemies, to assure his position by once more extending his frontier. This only excited fresh alarm on the part of his foes, and renewed determination to crush his Empire.[1] For Napoleon, it was a Sisyphean task, which finally overwhelmed him.

The treaty of Presburg with Austria, in December 1805, marked one of the points at which Napoleon would have liked to stop. After Austerlitz, he was anxious for peace with Alexander as well as with Francis. He did not exploit his victory as he might have done; although no armistice was concluded with Russia, the Czar's army was allowed to retire unmolested. A few weeks later, at the request of the Austrian plenipotentiaries at Presburg, Napoleon released his Russian prisoners.[2]

Without doubt the measure that contributed most to Prussia's final decision for war in the autumn of 1806 was Napoleon's creation of the Confederation of the Rhine. This completed the disintegration of the Holy Roman Empire, which had begun with the settlements of 1803. An article of the Treaty of Lunéville (1801), in giving France the left bank of the Rhine, had stipulated that the dispossessed hereditary princes in Germany should be compensated. These territorial compensations were settled in a series of treaties negotiated at Paris during the two following years. Together these treaties amounted to nothing less than a reconstruction of the political map of Germany. The broad result was that the number of States in the Empire was about halved. Prussia and Bavaria gained enormously, both in extent and in concentration of territories. The accessions to Würtemberg and Baden were almost as extensive and as valuable. Altogether one hundred and twelve States were wiped off the map. It is difficult now to understand why Napoleon undertook this vast plan of simplifying the territorial system of the German Empire.[3]

[1] Mowat, 128, 162.
[2] French Foreign Archives, *Autriche* 364.
[3] See Mowat, 104–110.

The Confederation alone made possible the work of unification accomplished by Bismarck sixty-five years later. In the place of the multitude of petty States, Napoleon substituted larger bodies. Enclaves and detached fragments of States were exchanged and consolidated; territories were arranged according to reason in place of accident. Napoleon's systematic mind took pleasure in bringing order out of chaos, but it is doubtful whether this was his immediate or essential object. Talleyrand pointed out, in a Memorandum prepared in 1803, that the political confusion of the small States with which Germany was covered from one end to the other — *cette poussière de Souverains* — was their least inconvenience: as enemies they were contemptible, as allies useless, as neutrals without guarantee.[1]

Some light on Napoleon's preference for sovereigns may be found in another Memorandum drawn up for him in 1802 by Tessier, who advanced the theory that the creation of republics was to be avoided, *as a war of the people against France would be fatal* — "A king can only dispose of the smallest part of his subjects' force; a people employs the whole."[2]

Napoleon's sincere desire for peace at this time (1806) is shown in the last communication from France to the Holy Roman Empire. On the first day of August, in his Note to the Diet, Napoleon expressed his hope that war would now cease: a new system had been created for Germany; the French eagles had passed back over the Rhine to their own country, "and have passed it for the last time."

"Why did this longed-for peace not come? Surely for the old reason: that to defend the Rhine frontier, a new bastion — the new Confederation — had been made in South Germany; and then, to defend this, Prussia had to be met and broken."[3]

On the 26 September 1806, Frederick William sent Napoleon, through the Prussian envoy at Paris, a long letter setting forth his grievances. The same courier brought a despatch,

[1] Foreign Archives, *Allemagne* 722, folio 223.
[2] *Ibid*, *Autriche* 366, folio 10.
[3] Mowat, 161.

which was nothing less than an *ultimatum*, making three demands which Napoleon was to answer by the 8 October.

(1) That the French troops should retire to the left bank of the Rhine.

(2) That Napoleon should oppose no obstacle to the foundation of a North German Confederation to include all the States outside of the Confederation of the Rhine.

(3) That Wesel should be separated from the French Empire.

Napoleon, who was already at the head of his troops in Germany, paid but scant attention to this communication. His campaign against Prussia was brief and conclusive: on the 14 October, the two Prussian armies were defeated, at Jena and Auerstädt; on the 27th, he entered Berlin; the great Prussian fortresses surrendered before the month was out; and the King and Queen took refuge at Königsberg in East Prussia.

After overwhelming Prussia, Napoleon found himself face to face with Russia. As First Consul, he had made overtures for an alliance with that Empire, but the negotiations were interrupted by the death of Paul the First. At Austerlitz he had decisively defeated Alexander, but Russia had refused to make peace. After Jena, still forced to advance, in order to defend himself, his troops occupied Prussian Poland, and threatened the traditional interests of Russia.

At the sight of the French troops, the Poles arose. The Emperor was received as a liberator: at Posen and Warsaw arcs of triumph were erected in his honor. Throwing off the mourning for their country, which they had worn for eleven years, the nobility left their châteaux and hastened to Warsaw to offer their services to the Emperor. The former costumes, the proscribed emblems, the Polish colors, reappeared as if by magic: it was like the resurrection of a nation!

Napoleon regarded this spontaneous arising from two points of view — as chief of State and as general. In the former capacity he refused to commit himself to any promises to grant the Poles their independence, but as head of the army

he recognized the importance of this enthusiasm and immediately took advantage of it by organizing the Polish levies in regular corps.

To the Poles he expressed his good wishes, but in enigmatic terms. He declared that France had never recognized the partition, but that Poland must rely for her salvation on Providence and herself; that she must first prove her vitality in taking arms to a man, and displaying her valor in the contest.

At Berlin, in November, Napoleon had offered sincerely to King Frederick-William a suspension of hostilities and a reconciliation, but these advances were refused. Napoleon then seriously considered the idea of dethroning the King, and of constituting a new state of Poland. There has been discovered the preamble of a decree in which he announced to the world that the House of Hohenzollern had ceased to reign; and the principal motive alleged was the indispensible necessity of having between the Rhine and the Vistula a buffer state identified in its interests with France, which would contribute to her defence.[1] He thus anticipated by more than a century the French policy of to-day. But he could not afford at that time to offend Austria, who had participated with Russia and Prussia in the partition of Poland. In vain he tried to propitiate the Austrian Government by offering Silesia in exchange for her Polish provinces.[2] Although Francis would have liked to recover the possessions stolen from his grandmother, Maria Theresa, by Frederick the Great, he did not care to offend either Russia or Prussia, and declined the proposition.

Under these circumstances Napoleon was forced to abandon his plan. Austria, with her fresh troops and her forces which were still imposing, was posted on his flank, ready to attack in case he met with any reverse. It was therefore of the greatest importance to conciliate that Power. The creation of a new kingdom of Poland upon her frontiers would certainly excite alarm, and perhaps add Austria to the list of his foes.

[1] 2 Bailleu, 581.
[2] *Corresp.*, 11339; Beer, 258.

He endeavored, therefore, to reassure her on the subject of Poland, and at the same time to arouse her apprehensions as to the designs of Russia on the Principalities along the lower Danube.

By a remarkable coincidence the Czar, feeling like Napoleon the need of an alliance, was making overtures to Austria at the same time. Since Austerlitz he had lost confidence in the power of his troops to resist the valor of the French armies and the genius of their chief. The power of Prussia, crushed at Jena, no longer offered any substantial support.

While Napoleon was submitting to Austria his offers by a new ambassador, General Andréossy, Alexander decided to send a special envoy to the assistance of his regular ambassador, Razoumovski. This was the Corsican Pozzo di Borgo, who had made his home in Russia in order to find an opportunity of combatting the plans of his glorious compatriot, whom he envied and detested. Alexander had recognized his real talent for intrigue, and was glad in this emergency to avail himself of Pozzo's invaluable services.

Pozzo arrived in Vienna on 13 December 1806, only a few days after Andréossy. He brought a long communication from the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs to Comte Stadion; also two personal letters from the Czar, one to the Emperor Francis, and the other to Archduke Charles. The letter to Francis was most pressing: "The fate of the world," wrote the Czar, "will largely depend on the resolution which Your Majesty is going to make."[1] But all of Pozzo's efforts were in vain. After several interviews, Stadion ended by stating that in view of the insufficiency of her armament, the imperfect restoration of her forces, the exhaustion of her finances, Austria was in no condition to reënter the fray. Nor was he more successful with Francis and Charles. The Emperor said: "I must gain time; I lack many things; the Emperor Alexander himself knows in what a state he left me a year ago. If I declare myself, I must expect to have all the forces of Bonaparte descend upon me: I risk being crushed, which

[1] These letters are given in full by Beer, 472–474.

would make matters even worse for your master, as he would no longer have any one upon whom he could count."

Pozzo's conversation with the Archduke, as reported in his letters, was even more monotonous. Charles, in a tone of embarrassment, cut him short by saying: "I can do nothing . . . His Majesty the Emperor . . . It is not my affair."[1]

If the envoy could have heard the conferences between Andréossy and Stadion he would have felt more reassured. Austria had received the French propositions, like those of Russia, with an evasive politeness. She refused to exchange Galicia for Silesia, but without declining the idea of a future alliance; in a word, she had no intention of entering into any engagements, or of becoming embroiled with any one.

The Russians had taken up their position behind Warsaw; in December, Napoleon advanced against their lines, and defeated them in three engagements, but the unfavorable season and the nature of the terrain made a decisive victory impossible. He therefore suspended operations, and put his troops in winter quarters. But in February, a sudden advance of the Russians toward Thorn and Dantzig obliged the Emperor to reopen the campaign. The Russians, in attacking the French left, had exposed their flank, and Napoleon hoped to inflict a crushing defeat. Unfortunately, the interception of a despatch to Bernadotte warned the Russians in time, and they escaped the snare. Closely pursued, Bennigsen was forced to risk a battle at Eylau. After twelve hours of the most bloody combat which had then been known, Napoleon remained master of the field of battle, but the victory was indecisive.

Active, resourceful, full of courage, Napoleon never showed himself greater than in this critical situation. He again put his troops in winter quarters, before Warsaw; pressed the siege of Dantzig, and called up his reserves. At the same time, he opened negotiations on all sides. Six days after the battle he sent one of his aides de camp, General Bertrand, to Frederick-William and again offered to restore his states to that

[1] Pozzo to Buchberg, 14/26 December 1806.

monarch if he would consent to abandon the Russian alliance,[1] but the King refused.

Several days later, Napoleon finally received a reply from Vienna. The Austrian note was intentionally obscure, and he read and reread it in the effort to penetrate the secret thought. "I cannot make anything out of it," he wrote Talleyrand, impatiently . . . "What do they want? I cannot understand it at all."[2]

In the face of this problem, more and more menacing, a new thought entered his mind: the idea of a Russian alliance. On the 14 March 1807 he wrote Talleyrand "I am of the opinion that an alliance with Russia will be very advantageous, if it is not a fantastic idea, and that some reliance can be placed on that Court."[3]

Some approaches that he made to Bennigsen were repulsed by that general, who said that it was his business to fight — not to negotiate. Forced to employ indirect means, Napoleon then had inserted in the Paris official journals several articles upon the barbarity of prolonging a contest without real object, and upon the general desire for peace.[4] Three weeks after Eylau, in a remarkable bulletin, he speaks of the terrible spectacle presented by the scene of conflict, and ends with the well-known words: "This sight is calculated to inspire princes with the love of peace and the horror of war."[5] Was not this bulletin of Eylau the first overture of peace to the Czar?

In the meantime Austria had decided on a policy which would put her in touch with the situation, without becoming involved in a compromising fashion. She proposed to all the belligerents, including England, a congress under her auspices, to consider terms of peace. This plan of mediation was not viewed with favor by Napoleon: he thought that the proposed congress would bring his adversaries together, and

[1] *Corresp.*, 11810.
[2] *Corresp.*, 11918.
[3] *Corresp.*, 12028.
[4] *Corresp.*, 11899.
[5] Fifty-first Bulletin of the French Army. Each campaign of Napoleon had its own series of Bulletins, beginning with No. 1.

prepare the way for a new coalition. Nevertheless, faithful to his principle of never repulsing a pacific offer, and wishing to give Austria no pretext for a rupture, he accepted the proposal of that Court. He only enjoined upon Talleyrand to gain time, and draw out as long as possible the preliminary discussions. The siege of Dantzig was approaching an end, spring was coming, and he hoped, before the congress could assemble, to impose peace on the principal one of his adversaries at the point of his sword.[1]

In the presence of these favorable symptoms, Talleyrand conceived the hope of a general peace. He preferred on general principles this solution to "cette paix sur le tambour," which Napoleon judged to be the only one practicable. On the 4 June, the minister drew up a report for the Emperor on the state of the negotiations, in which it is possible to read between the lines his fear that another decisive victory would render Napoleon even more exacting, and defer the general pacification. But the Emperor understood better than his minister the inner-thoughts of his adversaries, and their undying hostility: Talleyrand was right in theory, Napoleon in fact.

At this same moment, Alexander had finally decided to risk another encounter. He had rejoined his army, had met Frederick-William and Queen Louisa, had yielded to their wishes, and a new convention had been signed between Russia and Prussia. The Czar promised to Prussia not only a restoration of all she had lost, but a "rounding-out," with a new frontier. The Confederation of the Rhine was to be dissolved, and Austria to recover at least part of her lost provinces.[2] In a word, it was proposed to wipe out the consequences not only of Jena, but also of Ulm and Austerlitz!

The delay of Austria, and the military genius of Napoleon rendered abortive all these fine plans. For several days the Russians had been advancing their lines with the view of undertaking a second offensive. Napoleon concentrated his forces, and at Friedland, on the 14 June, the anniversary of

[1] See vols. XIV and XV of the *Correspondance* for these negotiations.
[2] See 4 Hardenberg, 69–75.

Marengo, he gained one of his most decisive victories. The results were immense: thirty thousand Russians were put *hors de combat;* Königsberg surrendered, and the King of Prussia fled to Memel, the only place that remained of all his vast estates. All Europe, after some moments of doubt, was convinced once more that Napoleon was invincible.

The day after the battle, Bennigsen wrote the Czar that all was lost, and nothing remained except to open negotiations for peace. Alexander at once authorized a suspension of hostilities, but for several days was reluctant to admit the necessity of suing for peace. As the full extent of the disaster became known, however, he decided to accept the situation. Passing abruptly from one extreme to the other, after having been the last to resign himself to the peace, he became its warmest advocate. He suddenly announced his desire to get personally in touch with Napoleon, and retraced his steps toward Tilsit "as if fascinated." Ten days after the battle, he was once more on the banks of the Niemen, bringing in his train the royal family of Prussia, who followed him with reluctant steps.[1]

Prince Lobanof was sent to Napoleon, with written instructions, in which we find the astounding statement: "The alliance of France and Russia has ever been the object of my desires, and I am convinced that that alone can guarantee the happiness and repose of the universe." The Czar continues: "An entirely new system must replace that which has existed up to now, and I flatter myself that we shall easily come to an understanding with the Emperor Napoleon, *provided we treat without intermediaries.*" [2] This was a proposition for an interview, which Napoleon immediately accepted, and it was arranged that they should meet the following day on a raft in the middle of the river which separated the two armies.

[1] 1 Vandal, 51.
[2] Tatistcheff, *Nouvelle Revue*, 1er juin 1890.

# CHAPTER TWO

## 1807

## THE RUSSIAN ALLIANCE

Meeting of the Emperors — The Czar Intercedes for Prussia — The Points Discussed — Napoleon's Treatment of Frederick-William — He Refuses to Negotiate with Hardenberg — News from Constantinople — Decline of the Ottoman Empire — Napoleon's Policy — Designs of Russia — Views of Talleyrand — Success of the French Embassy to Turkey — The British Fleet Fails to Overawe the Sultan — He Is Overthrown by a Revolt — Napoleon Restrains the Czar's Desire for a Partition — Alexander Recognizes the French Conquests — The Grand Duchy of Warsaw and the Kingdom of Saxony — Jérôme, King of Westphalia — Articles Regarding England and Turkey — Also, Sweden, Denmark and Portugal

THE raft erected in the middle of the Niemen, by means of barks placed together, contained a small pavillion, prettily furnished, which was divided into two rooms — one for the conferences of the sovereigns, the other for their staffs. The two emperors left the opposite banks of the river at the same moment, and met on the raft. Napoleon had with him Murat, Berthier, Bessières, Duroc and Caulaincourt. Alexander was accompanied by his brother Constantine, two generals, Bennigsen and Ouvarof, Prince Lobanof, and several aides de camp. Napoleon wore his usual uniform, with the little hat which had become legendary. When the Emperor, who arrived first, received the Czar, he found himself in the presence of a young man of thirty years, with a prepossessing and agreeable countenance, and very charming manners. Alexander was dressed in the costume of his Guards — a black coat with red facings, white breeches, and a large three-cornered hat, with black and white plumes. He advanced graciously to meet the Emperor, and by a spontaneous movement the two monarchs embraced; then they began to converse in a familiar manner.

The first words of Alexander were: "Sire, I hate the Eng-

lish as much as you do." "In that case," replied Napoleon, "peace is already made." [1]

Because of the harsh terms upon which Napoleon insisted, the armistice with Prussia had not yet been signed. The first request made by the Czar was that the Emperor should spare his ally any unnecessary humiliations, and Napoleon immediately assented.[2]

In order to facilitate the negotiations, Napoleon invited Alexander to take up his residence in Tilsit, where a part of the town was set aside for himself and his guard. The same privilege was also accorded to the King of Prussia. Alexander accepted this proposition, and became even more cordial and open. During this interview, which lasted nearly two hours, all the questions at issue were lightly touched upon, and no essential points of difference were found. "I have just seen the Emperor Alexander," wrote Napoleon to Joséphine that evening, "and I was well pleased with him. He is a very handsome, good, and young emperor; he has more mind than people generally think." [3]

On his side, Alexander has recounted his impressions of Napoleon in these words: "I have never had a greater prejudice against any one than I had against *him*, but after three-quarters of an hour of conversation with him, they all disappeared like a dream." [4] The first time that he received a French diplomat after the interview, he exclaimed: "Why have I not met him sooner; . . . the veil is rent and the time of error is past!" [5]

Questioned upon two points which Alexander had very much at heart, Napoleon assured the Czar that it was not his intention to destroy Prussia or to reëstablish Poland. If he put to one side the question of Austria, as Alexander himself desired, he announced no projects against the existence of that empire, so necessary to the security of Russia. The only

[1] *Cf.* Tatistcheff, 152; 6 Bignon, 316; 2 Rose, 118.
[2] 3 Hardenberg, 475.
[3] Letters to Joséphine.
[4] Report of Savary, 9 October 1807.
[5] Letter of Lesseps, 19 August 1807.

point upon which Napoleon laid stress was that Alexander should aid him to secure the repose of the Continent by a maritime peace, even if it were necessary to assure it by force of arms.

At the second interview, on the following day, the King of Prussia was present, and was introduced to Napoleon by the Czar. The appearance of Frederick-William was in striking contrast with that of Alexander: he was by nature lacking in grace and ease of manners, and misfortune had made him even more awkward. "Il ne sut faire à triste fortune bon visage." His gloomy air, his eyes fixed on the ground, his hesitating speech, all displayed an overpowering constraint. "In the person of her King, Napoleon judged and definitely condemned Prussia; without hope of attaching him to his system, forced to conserve him, because this was the price of the Russian alliance, he only thought of the means to reduce him to impotency, and, being unable to give him the death-stroke, wished to make it impossible for him to live." [1]

Napoleon's treatment of the King was haughty and harsh; he dwelt upon the defects which he had noted in the Prussian military system, and gave him some very offensive advice. Then he made a demand which was both severe and unnecessary. Because the Prussian minister, Hardenberg, before the war, had refused an audience to his envoy, Napoleon now declined to treat with him, which was in effect to demand his dismissal, and deprive his sovereign of his counsels. After a painful interview, they parted very coldly, and Frederick-William returned to the other side of the river, while Napoleon and Alexander made an appointment for that evening in Tilsit. They dined together, and did not separate until nine o'clock.[2]

Alexander was passionately fond of military manœuvres, and to please him Napoleon ordered daily reviews of his troops. It was on one of these occasions that a courier brought to the Emperor some despatches from Sébastiani, the French am-

[1] 1 Vandal, 68.
[2] 3 Hardenberg, 465–466, 480.

bassador at Constantinople. Napoleon opened and read them, then exclaimed to Alexander: "It is the decree of Providence that the Turkish Empire can no longer exist!"[1]

In order to understand the situation in Turkey, it is necessary to review briefly the recent history of that distracted country.

Ever since the expedition to Egypt, Napoleon had not ceased to take a profound interest in the affairs of the East, and particularly in those of Turkey. For many years the Ottoman Empire had been in a state of decline, and the partition of Poland seemed to presage the dismemberment of Turkey. The empire was in process of dissolution: the provinces were no longer submissive to the capital, the pashas declared their independence, the people were in revolt, and the monarchy of the sultans was only an assembly of hostile sovereignties. It seemed as though the least shock would lead to the fall of this ruin. In every cabinet in Europe, statesmen were watching the situation, ready to profit by the dissolution if it came, and to prevent other States from securing more than their fair share of the spoils. In this latent conflict between the courts of Petersburg, Vienna, Berlin, and London, Napoleon saw an opportunity to drive a wedge in the coalition, and cause its dissolution. It was his policy to excite in turn the covetousness and the jealousy of each of the Great Powers, showing himself either determined to dismember Turkey, or decided to conserve it.

In the first overtures to Paul the First, when First Consul, and later to Alexander, he had called their attention to the precarious condition of Turkey, predicted the dissolution of that empire, and indicated in the division of the remnants a bond of union between France and Russia. In sending Duroc on a mission to Saint Petersburg, he had instructed him to speak of Catherine the Great as a princess who had foreseen the fall of the Turkish Empire, and who had felt that Russia never would really be prosperous until she had an outlet for her commerce to the South.[2]

[1] Report of Savary, 4 November 1807.
[2] Tratchevski, 115, quoted 1 Vandal, 5.

KING FREDERICK–WILLIAM

When Alexander proved deaf to these tempting offers, and resolved to adhere to the coalition, Napoleon changed his tactics, and decided to use Turkey as an arm against Russia. To the Sultan, he expressed his desire to be on friendly terms, and warned him against the designs of Russia.

But Russia had only abandoned for the moment her traditional policy. Her system had always consisted in being in turn either the greatest enemy or the warmest friend of Turkey. Both Paul and Alexander, at the beginning of their reigns, had chosen the second rôle in preference to the first. But, for the brutality of conquest, they had substituted a form of protectorate which was hardly less onerous. The Turks became restive under this yoke, and the Sultan turned for support to the rising power of France. From the début of the Empire, Napoleon began to cultivate Selim, and encourage him in these tendencies. He advised him, if he did not wish to lose his country and his religion, to get rid of his enemies, and call his friends to the ministry.[1]

Napoleon realized too well, however, the military decadence of the Ottomans to place much confidence in their active assistance; what he hoped for was a means of breaking the concert of his enemies. During the eighteenth century, Prussia and Austria had viewed with alarm the approach of Russia to the Danube. Since then their fear of revolutionary France had distracted their attention from the Muscovite peril. From 1804 to 1807 the essential feature of Napoleon's policy, the most original and the most able, was to bring about an understanding with Prussia, and above all with Austria, upon the Oriental question; to arouse their fears, and attach them to France by the sentiment of a common danger. This policy appears in the despatches of Talleyrand, but not less in the letters and conversations of the Emperor. In 1805, on the very eve of the war with Austria, Napoleon wrote Francis to indicate in the East the point of contact and of reunion between their two States.[2]

[1] *Corresp.*, 8298.
[2] *Corresp.*, 9038.

On this point, the views of Talleyrand went even further than those of Napoleon. Inheritor of the policy of the Court of Versailles, he sincerely desired a reconciliation between France and Austria. Banished from Italy and the Low Countries, driven back in Germany, the only line of expansion and of compensation for Austria was to the East, along the lower Danube. In losing contact with France, Austria would cease to be her rival, and would become an enemy of Russia, with whose ambitions she would come in conflict. Talleyrand therefore proposed to offer to Austria the Roumanian Principalities, and Bessarabia, so as to extend her territory to the mouth of the Danube, and form a barrier between Russia and Turkey. This policy, he thought, would prevent future coalitions, assure the French conquests, and solve the problem of a durable peace.[1]

In the peace of Presburg, Napoleon failed to follow the counsels of his minister. He judged then, and correctly as events turned out, that a reconciliation with Alexander was not impossible, and he did not wish to raise between France and Russia a barrier of opposing interests. Besides, it is doubtful whether Austria, either then or later, would have fallen in with this plan, which Talleyrand himself called a "political romance." [2]

In November 1806, Napoleon had sent Sébastiani as ambassador to Constantinople, with instructions to press the Sultan to declare formally his independence of Russia. This mission was an entire success, but Russia immediately retaliated by throwing an army into Moldavia, and seizing the Principalities. The Turks for a moment seemed panic-stricken, but the news of the Jena campaign ended their indecision. War was declared on Russia, and an envoy was sent to negotiate a treaty with Napoleon.

The English ambassador at Constantinople, Arbuthnot, after having vainly endeavored by his remonstrances to restrain the Sultan in his warlike measures, as a supreme argu-

[1] See 6 Thiers, 342; 6 Sorel, 489–490.
[2] 2 Bailleu, 360.

ment, sent for the British fleet, which was cruising in the Ægean Sea. The squadron forced the Dardanelles and took up its station before the capital. The Sultan was called upon to reverse his policy, dismiss Sébastiani, repudiate the French alliance, and renew his treaties with Russia. No one, not even Napoleon himself, expected the Turks to resist, but the miracle occurred. Relying upon the protection of the Great Emperor, Selim declined to yield, and the British fleet, which had come to menace, rather than to act, was finally forced to withdraw. The failure of this attempt made a great impression on all Europe.

The despatches from Sébastiani, which the Emperor received at Tilsit, told in detail of the events of the 27 May: the discontent of the soldiers, the uprising of the people, the siege of the palace, and the abdication of the Sultan. Napoleon was the ally of Selim — not of Turkey, with whom he had signed no treaty. He declared that the fall of that monarch had released him from all obligations, and that he was ready to enter into all the plans of the Czar.

During the days which followed, Napoleon spoke continually of the Orient. With his burning eloquence, he pointed out to Alexander how easy it would be to take possession of parcels of this empire in plain process of dissolution.[1]

Alexander listened to him with rapture, and the plan of partition became to him the "Greek Project," which had enchanted his grandmother. But, the more enthusiastic the Czar became, the more Napoleon impressed upon him the difficulty of any immediate action: "to proceed to a total partition would be an operation full of difficulties and perils; it would risk provoking between France and Russia a contact fatal to their harmony."

At Tilsit, the two sovereigns endeavored to find subjects upon which they could agree, and points of dissension were carefully avoided. In reality, Napoleon himself was not decided. "My policy regarding Turkey," he wrote Talley-

[1] See 7 Thiers, 644-653.

rand, "is shifting, and is at the point of falling through."[1] This was a matter upon which he wished to excite the covetousness of the Czar, but to evade any positive entanglement. Above all, he wished to assure a permanent peace, and to avoid anything which might possibly imperil it.

Certain primary questions were soon definitely settled. Alexander recognized, and even guaranteed, all the French conquests prior to the war of 1806. He agreed that Louis should reign in Holland, and Murat in the duchy of Berg, also that the Emperor should be Protector of the Confederation of the Rhine. He accepted the extension of the Grand Empire in Northern Italy, and the sovereignty of Joseph at the southern end of the Peninsula.

These matters settled, there remained only three other points: the fate of Prussia, the measures to be taken against England, and the articles to be drawn up on the subject of Turkey.

Napoleon had promised Alexander to reëstablish Prussia, but he proposed to do it in his own way, and in such a manner as to guard his own interests. Without going into all the minute details of his plans, it may be stated that they comprised the creation, from the Polish provinces of Prussia, of the new Grand Duchy of Warsaw, to be assigned to Saxony, which became a kingdom, and the erection of the new Kingdom of Westphalia, for the benefit of Jérôme.

Alexander, on the 4 July, in a note accompanied by a very friendly letter, even went so far as to propose to Napoleon that Jérôme should be given the throne of Warsaw, and rights to that of Saxony by means of a marriage with the daughter of the new king. This suggestion was promptly rejected by the Emperor. "To call Prince Jérôme to the throne of Saxony," replied Napoleon, "is almost, in a moment, to upset all our arrangements . . . The policy of the Emperor Napoleon is that his immediate influence shall not extend beyond the Elbe, and he has adopted this policy because it is the only one which can be reconciled with the system of sin-

[1] *Corresp.*, 12886.

cere and lasting friendship which he desires to contract with the great empire of the North." [1]

The articles regarding England and Turkey were closely related. Alexander assumed the obligation of acting as mediator between France and England. If, by the first of December England had not consented to make peace, on the terms proposed, the Czar agreed to declare war.

On the Continent there remained, outside the alliance, only one Great Power, Austria, which could not be coerced. But the three second-class nations, Sweden, Denmark and Portugal, were to be summoned to close their ports to British goods, and declare war on England. If they refused, France and Russia were immediately to begin hostilities.

At the same time, Napoleon was to employ his best efforts to secure peace between Russia and Turkey. If the Porte declined to accept the terms offered, "the two high contracting Powers are in agreement to relieve from the yoke and vexations of the Turk all of the provinces of the Ottoman Empire in Europe, except the city of Constantinople and the province of Roumelia." [2]

[1] *Corresp.*, 12849.
[2] 2 De Clercq, 214.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 1807

## THE QUEEN OF PRUSSIA

The King Desires to Retain Magdeburg — He Sends for the Queen — Her Visit to Tilsit — Her Appearance — A Visit from the Emperor — Louisa Makes Her Plea — She Dines with Napoleon — The Episode of the Rose — Louisa Renews Her Attacks — Napoleon Orders the Treaty Signed — Indignation of the Queen — Her Last Words to the Emperor — Her Despair — The Treaty with Prussia — Alexander's Perfidy — Napoleon's *Naïveté* — His Grief for the Little Napoleon — The Treaty Only a Truce — The Impression on Europe

THE negotiations for the Treaty of Tilsit were different from any before or since that time. There were no conferences at a fixed hour, no ambassadors, not even any secretaries. "I shall be your secretary," said Napoleon to Alexander, "and you will be mine." The two emperors saw each other and conferred at all hours. The Court of Prussia was kept informed by the Czar of all the phases of the negotiations. Frederick-William clung obstinately to the idea of preserving some of his territory on the left bank of the Elbe, especially Magdeburg. This strongly fortified city, one of the commercial centres of Germany, which had been annexed to Brandenburg by the Great Elector, was considered as valuable as a province. From the first, Napoleon had refused to have any negotiations with the King, and he was forced to plead his cause through the mediation of Alexander, who was becoming tired of his rôle.

To find a way out of this embarrassing situation, the Prussian ministers suggested a supreme effort. This was to send for Queen Louisa to make a final plea for her unfortunate country. The beauty and the grace of this queen had long been a force in European diplomacy. Her fascination for Alexander had in previous years attracted and retained that monarch in the Prussian alliance. It was Louisa who had

planned the memorable scene when, prior to the last Austrian campaign, the Czar and the King pledged their fidelity to the Coalition over the tomb of the Great Frederick at midnight in the Garrison Church. Before Jena, she had been the life and the soul of the Prussian war-party, and had drawn the nation into that disastrous adventure. Napoleon, who rightly held her largely responsible for the war, had spoken of her in his bulletins [1] in very uncomplimentary terms, for which he was reproached by Joséphine in her letters.

After the campaign, Louisa had found refuge at Memel in East Prussia, the most remote city in her dominions. From this sad retreat she followed anxiously the negotiations which were to decide the fate of her country. When she was asked to come to Tilsit, to plead with the conqueror, who had assailed her both as a sovereign and as a woman, she had a momentary feeling of revolt, but finally yielded to the sad necessity. Her visit to Tilsit was officially announced. On the 6 July, Napoleon wrote Joséphine: "The beautiful Queen of Prussia is coming to dine with me to-day."

On her arrival at Tilsit, Louisa was received with military honors, and entered the city in a Court carriage. She was accompanied by two of her Court ladies, whose toilettes, excellent examples of German taste, "faisaient mal aux yeux." In spite of the emotion which almost stifled her heart, "the Queen was divinely lovely, with the slightly languishing grace of her bearing and the vaporous elegance of her toilette, of white crêpe, embroidered with silver, a diadem of pearls on her forehead." She went directly to the humble lodging of her husband. There she was surrounded by the Prussian ministers, all prodigal with their words of advice and encouragement. "For Heaven's sake," said the poor woman, "give me a little rest, so that I may gather my thoughts." Suddenly she heard the cry that the Emperor was coming. Napoleon arrived on horseback, a short riding-whip in his hand, escorted by his marshals and his whole staff. The King and his suite advanced to meet him.

[1] See *Corresp.*, 10967.

The Emperor dismounted and ascended the steep and narrow staircase to the apartment of the Queen. When Louisa apologized for putting him to so much trouble, Napoleon gallantly replied: "What would one not do to reach such an end." After inquiring how he liked the northern climate, Louisa plunged at once into the object of her visit. She bewailed the misfortunes of her country, which, blinded by the glorious recollections of Frederick, had been cruelly punished for provoking the issue of war. She endeavored to give to the scene a touching and pathetic character — worthy, as Napoleon said later, of a tragic actress. Napoleon vainly endeavored to turn the conversation into lighter vein by complimenting the Queen upon her toilette. "Is it of crêpe, or Italian gauze?" he asked. "Shall we speak of dress in such a solemn moment?" replied the Queen. She remained mistress of the occasion, and expressed all that she had to say — demanding the restoration of territory in Westphalia and the North, and above all, Magdeburg. "You ask much," replied the Emperor, "but I will think it over." With these words of hope, he took his leave.

That evening the Queen was invited to dine with the Emperor. At that time Louisa was thirty-one years of age. Although of medium height, she had an imposing carriage; her walk was full of grace, her profile admirable in its regularity, and she still retained that fullness of beauty which follows the first flower of youth. We are all familiar with the celebrated portrait by Richter in the Museum at Cologne, in which the Queen is depicted at a somewhat more mature age, the goitre cleverly concealed by a scarf around her neck.

Just before the dinner, occurred the celebrated "scene of the rose," to which Napoleon alludes in one of his letters to Joséphine. Taking a beautiful white rose from a vase on the console, the Emperor offered it to Louisa. For a moment the Queen hesitated, then she accepted it, saying: "Yes, Sire, but at least with Magdeburg." Napoleon replied: "Your Majesty would do well to remember that it is for me to offer, and that you can only accept." The response was perhaps

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rather severe, but, as Napoleon remarked later, his gallantry would have cost him dear if he had exchanged cities and provinces for an act of politeness.[1]

At table the Queen was seated between the two emperors, at the right of Napoleon, who had the King upon his left. During the dinner, Louisa resumed her attacks. She employed all the power of a cultivated mind, of a refined amiability, of an able coquetterie, to gain her ends; it required a constant care on the part of Napoleon not to be caught in any trap, and not to pronounce any word which could be considered as a promise or be called an engagement.

During the rest of the evening the same struggle continued, the Queen seizing every opportunity to arrive at her ends, Napoleon skillfully avoiding her redoubled attacks, without for a moment ceasing to be perfectly amiable, and rivaling the Czar in his courtesy. In the *Mémorial* he says: "In spite of my address and all my efforts, she showed herself constantly mistress of the conversation, dominating it always, and returning continually to her subject, perhaps too much so, but with great tact, and without giving cause for anger. It must be admitted, however, that the subject was important to her, and the time short and precious."

Nevertheless, Napoleon, while preserving complete control over his feelings, and gallantly doing the honors of his table, was secretly impatient, and had no idea of exposing himself again to the wiles of so clever a woman. As soon as the Queen had left, he sent for the two plenipotentiaries, Talleyrand and Kourakine, and insisted that the treaty should be drawn up and signed immediately. The treaty was accordingly executed the following day, the 7 July; the fruitless efforts of the Queen had only served to hasten the conclusion.

In a letter to Joséphine, Napoleon thus sums up his impressions of Louisa: "The Queen of Prussia is really charming; she is full of coquetterie for me, but do not be jealous: I am an oil-cloth, upon which all that simply glides off. It would cost me too dearly to play the gallant."

[1] There are several versions of the episode of the rose. See 3 Abrantès, 322.

The poor Queen returned home completely happy. She thought that she had been so successful that she declared herself ready to prolong her stay, and establish herself indefinitely at Tilsit. The following day she was ready to resume her attempts, when she learned with stupefaction that the treaty was signed. She appeared very indignant, shed many tears, and complained bitterly that she had been deceived. Resolved not to see Napoleon again, she was unwilling to accept another invitation, and only agreed after a personal visit from the Czar. She cried loudly that she had been grossly deceived by the Emperor, who had broken his word to her. This was absolutely denied by Alexander, who had carefully followed the entire conversation. She finally acceded to his insistance, and consented to visit Napoleon, but not without showing her disgust, while assuming the airs of an offended coquette. She wore a splendid, but rather theatrical costume, of red and gold, a muslin turban on her head; but her eyes were red with weeping, and her face discomposed.

Napoleon tells us that at the moment of leaving, when he descended to escort the Queen, she said to him, in a sentimental and impressive tone: "Is it possible that having had the good-fortune to see so closely the man of the century and of history, he does not give me the liberty and the satisfaction of being able to assure him that he has attached me to him for life?" "Madame, I am to be pitied," gravely replied the Emperor; "it is indeed my unfortunate lot." With these words he took leave of her for the last time. Entering her carriage, and bursting into tears, she called Duroc, whom she highly esteemed, renewed all her complaints to him, and said, in pointing to the mansion: "There is a house in which I have been cruelly deceived." She complained also to Alexander that she had been a victim of bad faith, but could not recall any positive assurance of the Emperor. Her mistake had been to believe that the passing homages rendered to her charms signified a profound and irresistible impression, carrying with it submission to her empire. Brusquely undeceived, she felt herself betrayed, and parted with embittered

feelings, from which she was never to recover. "If my heart is opened," she said, in the words of Mary Tudor, "they will read the name of Magdeburg." [1]

The treaty with Prussia was signed the 9 July and ratified three days later. Frederick-William lost a third of his estates: all that he had possessed in western Germany and in Poland; he undertook to close his ports to English commerce; in addition he promised on the first of December to declare war on that Power if peace had not previously been concluded with France. At this price the King was nominally to reënter into full possession of his dominions, but by a supplemental convention it was provided that the French troops were to evacuate Prussia gradually, and only in case the war-indemnity had been paid. In this way Napoleon had it in his power to delay indefinitely the withdrawal of his forces.

Unfortunately for Napoleon, Louisa was not the only person deceived at Tilsit. Under his affable air and open manners, Alexander concealed all the finesse of an Oriental diplomat. Prodigal of polite acts and friendly protestations, he duped Napoleon with all the grace and all the elegance of a courtier of Versailles. He had captivated the Emperor by his crafty professions of admiration and by his *empressements*, which were almost filial. Alexander let Napoleon do most of the talking, and showed himself an attentive listener. The Emperor told him the story of his first victories, which had filled the world with amazement: the campaigns of Italy and of Egypt. Then, in a tone of good-fellowship, he unveiled the art and the methods of his *métier:* he pointed out that the secret of victory is not an unsolvable mystery, that in war presence of mind and sang-froid often upset the most profound calculations of the enemy: the whole secret is to be frightened the last. Alexander listened devoutly, and engraved in his memory all that he heard, "well decided," as he afterwards related, "to profit by it when the occasion arose." [2]

[1] For the full details of the Queen's visit to Tilsit, see Adami's *Louise de Prusse.*

[2] *Mémoires de la comtesse Edling*, 85.

Flattered by Alexander's interest, Napoleon was also indiscreet enough to reveal the sources of his power, to explain the structure of his government, to pass in review the men whom he employed — indicating their origins, their passions, their different aptitudes; what price he attached to their services, how he preferred to overlook their faults rather than to dispense with their good qualities, liking better to bend than to break them.

Responding to these effusions, Alexander very frankly confessed his visit to the "Pretender" at Mittau during the last campaign, adding that he considered this prince "the man the most worthless and the most insignificant in Europe." Napoleon agreed that the future Louis the Eighteenth was lacking in all the qualities which a sovereign should possess.

At the same time, Alexander displayed the most profound interest in the new dynasty which reigned over France: he desired Napoleon to speak of his family, of his household, of his intimate thoughts. The Emperor then recalled his recent loss, in the death of the eldest son of Louis, the child whom he termed "the little Napoleon." He dwelt upon the grief of the mother, and showed that Queen Hortense occupied a great place in his affections. A few months later the Czar made a delicate allusion to these confidences, when he said to the French envoy, Caulaincourt, on the occasion of the birth of the future Napoleon the Third: "Give my compliments to the Emperor: I am very glad that it is a boy."

That Alexander deceived Napoleon at Tilsit, that his only object was to gain time, plainly appears in a work written by one of his aides de camp and dedicated to the Czar:[1]

"The peace of Tilsit offered to the Czar none of the guaranties which should be found in an instrument of that kind. The erection of the Duchy of Warsaw was evidently a measure hostile to Russia; the conferring of the sovereignty upon the King of Saxony, who was descended from the former kings of Poland, also denoted the project of inspiring the Poles with

[1] Boutourline, *Military History of the Campaign of 1812*, quoted by Thibaudeau, 55.

hopes the realization of which could only be prejudicial to Russia . . . Even the city of Dantzig, which the French had the right to occupy until the conclusion of a maritime peace, could only be considered as a stronghold which Napoleon had reserved for his future operations against Russia. The Emperor Alexander could not misconstrue the spirit of these arrangements; but the unfortunate conditions then prevailing in Europe made it necessary for him, at any price, to avoid war. It was of the highest importance to gain the time necessary to sustain properly the conflict which every one well knew would be resumed some day."

Therefore, the famous Treaty of Tilsit was, for one of the contracting parties, only a truce, during which better to prepare for war; Napoleon confided in the good faith of Alexander, and the Czar was already meditating new perfidies.

It is unnecessary to search further than Warsaw for the principal cause of the misunderstanding which threatened to bring about a new clash between France and Russia: "In creating the grand-duchy, a defensive conception in the mind of the Emperor, but calculated almost inevitably to assume an offensive aspect, the Treaty of Tilsit had introduced in the Franco-Russian alliance a germ of death, and contained the principle of its own destruction." [1]

Nevertheless, this treaty, which concealed so many traps, made an enormous impression on Europe, bringing profound disappointment to Napoleon's enemies, and great satisfaction to his admirers. The decisive defeat of Prussia, the creation of the Duchy of Warsaw, the erection of a new kingdom in Germany, the homage of the Czar, whose treachery was not suspected, were all subjects of universal astonishment, and added a new renown to the already famous name of Napoleon. It was the apogee of his power, the most brilliant epoch of a career thus far uniformly successful.[2]

[1] 1 Vandal, 103.

[2] A good analysis of the treaties is given in Mowat, 180–182. The actual text of the Secret Articles was one of the best-kept secrets in diplomatic history. Napoleon's copy disappeared from the French Archives in 1815. The complete text was first published by Vandal in 1891.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 1807

## A DIPLOMATIC RECONNAISSANCE

The Return of the Emperor — He Sends Savary as Envoy to the Czar — Object of His Mission — Hostility of the Russians — Savary's Cordial Reception by Alexander — Insignificance of the Empress — The Czar's Interest in Turkey — His Hatred of Etiquette — The Empress Dowager — Her Power at Court — Savary Ostracized — The Quarantine Relaxed — His Opinions of Public Men — He Wins Mme. Narischkine — Napoleon's Gifts — Savary's Notes on the Court — Qualifications of an Ambassador — Caulaincourt Chosen — His Character and Career — Napoleon Prepares the Way — His Lack of Confidence in the Alliance

ON THE 9 July, the emperors parted, and Alexander recrossed the Niemen. From the bank of the river Napoleon made with his hand signs of au revoir. At six o'clock the same evening he himself left for Königsberg, where he spent four days. He then travelled directly to Dresden, passing ninety-two hours in his carriage. After a short visit to his new ally, the King of Saxony, he set out for Paris, arriving at Saint-Cloud early on the morning of the 27 July, after an absence of ten months. The following day he received the great dignitaries of the Empire. All the official discourses can be summed up in the fulsome remarks of the first-president Séguier: "Napoleon is beyond human history; he belongs to heroic times. He is above admiration; only love can rise to his level."

Fearing that Alexander, on his return to his capital, might be swayed by interests unfriendly to France, Napoleon wished to preserve his influence by keeping constantly in communication with his new ally. Diplomatic relations were to be resumed at once, but the choice of an ambassador required reflection, and would take time. Meanwhile, the Emperor decided to send as a temporary envoy to Saint Petersburg one of his aides de camp, Savary, who had been present at Tilsit,

and seemed to be agreeable to Alexander. By way of introduction, Savary carried a personal letter from the Emperor to Alexander: "I pray Your Majesty to receive him with personal kindness, and to place entire confidence in what he says on my behalf."[1]

Having lived for ten years beside the Emperor, seeing him at all hours, Savary seemed well adapted to transmit the thoughts of his master, rendering not alone the sense, but also the characteristic form, which would recall to the Czar the many hours of intimate conversation at Tilsit.

His mission had also another, and even more important object. The negotiations at Tilsit had been conducted personally by Alexander. What would be the attitude toward the new alliance of his ministers, of the heads of his nobility, of the leaders of public opinion, of the society of the capital? Would all of these elements be favorable, or would they influence the Czar to return gradually to his former hostile sentiments? The mission of Savary was therefore a diplomatic reconnaissance: "He must consider near at hand the Russian society, study the factions, the coteries, unravel the play of intrigues, examine the means of creating a French party, size up the spirit of the army, and transmit upon all these points circumstantial details. Napoleon had need of all this information in order to appraise the Russian alliance at its true value, and shape his future policy accordingly."[2] Savary's talents of observation and penetration admirably fitted him to play this rôle, and his interesting despatches show how well he carried it out.

Savary crossed the Niemen with a suite of officers and secretaries. As soon as he passed the Russian frontier he got an inkling of what was in store for him. He soon perceived that the Russian people still regarded the French as enemies. As Alexander had not yet rescinded the order to invoke the malediction of Heaven on the French, "enemies of the Czar, enemies of God," the people continued to pray in the churches

[1] *Corresp.*, 12910.
[2] 1 Vandal, 114.

for the extermination of the French nation. As the travellers approached the capital, the feeling of hostility became more evident and more bitter. Arrived at Saint Petersburg, Savary even found it difficult to secure lodgings: no one wished to house him. The only welcome that he received was at the palace of the Czar, where he had an audience the night of his arrival.[1]

After inquiring as to the health of the Emperor, Alexander began to converse in a friendly and intimate tone, recalling the days at Tilsit, and displaying a great desire to be agreeable to the envoy. Savary has left in writing a report of this interview, as of all the others which he had with the Czar, putting it in the form of a dialogue, which adds greatly to its vivacity and interest. After reading the Emperor's letter, Alexander said: "At Tilsit he gave me marks of attachment which I shall never forget. I appreciate the evidences of friendship which he gives me to-day, and am grateful to him for having chosen you to transmit them to me."

After a moment of silence, he continued: "He is an extraordinary man, and we must admit that, although we have some rights to your esteem, you have a marked superiority, and it would be senseless to contest it. Besides, I hope that *that* is all ended: I have given my word, and I shall keep it." [2]

On the 24 July, the day after his arrival, Savary dined at the Winter Palace, and a few days later at the summer residence of the Czar. On both occasions there were only a few guests present. A few minutes before dinner was served, the Empress entered, with her sister, Princess Amélie of Baden. The Empress Elizabeth was very beautiful and very graceful, but she had never succeeded in winning the heart of her husband. Refusing to condone his many infidelities, she had retired more and more into herself, concealing her feelings under a mask of indifference, and living like a stranger in the Court of the Czar. She received the French envoy with a polite apathy. At table, Savary was seated at the right of the

[1] See 3 *Mémoires*, 149; also his Report, 6 August 1807.
[2] Report of Savary, cited above.

SAVARY, DUC DE ROVIGO

Czar, who talked mainly on military topics. The conversation was general, and there was an entire absence of constraint. After dinner, the Empress and her sister soon retired. The Czar then took Savary to one side, and had a long and intimate talk with him. After speaking of his projected visit to Paris, in which he seemed to take great interest, Alexander turned the subject to politics, and inquired what were the Emperor's plans regarding Constantinople. Savary replied evasively that, while the subject had been mentioned, he had no instructions. The Czar went on to say that if the dissolution of Turkey took place, he hoped to share in the division of the remains, and counted upon the attachment which the Emperor had displayed for him. Then he turned to less delicate subjects. At the end of the evening, Savary retired enchanted with his reception, and flattered by the manner in which he had been so freely admitted to the confidence of the Czar.

Savary soon found that the Czar had no Court, in the ordinary sense of the word. He lived more like a wealthy and powerful seigneur, surrounded by his private household and his intimate friends. He held but few official receptions, and never gave ceremonial dinners, because, in that case, "he must occupy a raised seat, like a sovereign." When the envoy, astonished at this simplicity, demanded whether there was really no Court of Petersburg, he was told to look for it in the palace of the Empress Dowager.

The Empress Marie, the widow of Paul the First, and the mother of Alexander, had preserved in Russia a position without precedent. Her son, in mounting the throne, had expressed his wish that she should retain the rank, the allowances, and all the honorary privileges which she had formerly enjoyed. Detesting ceremony, and liking only military pomp and parade, Alexander had practically divided the attributes of sovereignty into two parts, retaining for himself only the oversight of affairs, and leaving to his mother all else. Marie was well-fitted to play this rôle, and time had only served to increase her prestige. A woman of great kindness of heart, devoting her time largely to charity and good-works,

she had founded an empire of her own, based on love and gratitude. She liked etiquette as much as her son hated it, and took pride in maintaining the sovereignty in its most imposing forms. The "Ancienne Cour," as it was called, thus remained in Russia the great social power, and although destitute of authority, preserved a powerful influence. This Court has been compared to the House of Lords in England: "Slow to move and to decide, guardian of traditions, it moderated the movement of the State; it prevented, without acting; and often, in order to preclude a measure from taking effect, it was only necessary not to approve it." Now, this Court had not ratified the peace with Napoleon, and it simply ignored the existence of the French envoy. Savary soon found this out — much to the injury of his amour-propre. "The thirtieth," he writes, "I was presented to the Empress *mère*, at the Tauride Palace; my reception was cold, and did not last a minute in all."

In vain Savary inscribed his name at the doors of the principal mansions: he was not admitted, and no one returned his calls. All the great houses of the capital were closed to him, and he was only received and welcomed at the Emperor's palace. As usual in such cases, the women were the most hostile. They were all French in their educations and their tastes, but French of the Ancien Régime, with a profound horror of the Revolution and all its acts. During the first weeks of his stay, Savary did not obtain access to a single mansion. When he dined with the Czar, the other guests left immediately after dinner, and he returned sadly home to the society of his secretary.[1]

A few weeks later, there were several brilliant receptions to celebrate the fête of the Empress Dowager. On these occasions the Czar paid marked attentions to the French envoy, and the example of the sovereign had a favorable effect. "Faces are much pleasanter," wrote Savary; "several doors have opened." At the end of six weeks of quarantine, he was received in certain houses, and on the 23 September he was

[1] 3 Savary, 153.

able for the first time to send the result of his observations on some of the principal personages of the Court. He had made the acquaintance of Prince Adam Czartoryski, a great friend of the Czar, who had been in the Foreign Office before Austerlitz, was now a senator, and member of the Council. Savary was unable to comprehend him, and formed a very unfavorable opinion of his merits. Among the principal officials of the Empire, there were only two or three, like Prince Lobanof, designated for the portfolio of War, and Comte Roumiantsof, Minister of Commerce, who were favorable to France. Among the officers who are sketched by Savary, there stands out the portrait of Prince Bagration, the hero of the late war, "a gloomy, ambitious man, who does not love the French."

Foiled in nearly all his approaches, Savary now opened up a new line of attack, and paid particular homage to several ladies whom the Czar had distinguished by his attentions. It was in connection with one of these friends of Alexander that he won his most brilliant success. Introduced by her husband to Madame Narischkine, Savary was very well received, and thought that it would be possible by some small services to win her entirely to the French interests. He wrote both Duroc and Caulaincourt on the subject.

Napoleon was pleased with the idea, but admonished Savary, through Champagny, that he had been indiscreet in taking so many people into his confidence: "Everything which pertains to the private life of a sovereign should be a sacred subject." After this official reproof, Napoleon wrote personally to Savary in a line of friendly *brusquerie:* "I never knew that you could be so gallant as you have become. However the *modes* for your beautiful Russians shall be sent you. I am going to take care of the expenses. You will present them, with the explanation that, having by chance opened the despatch in which you asked for them, I have wished myself to make the selection. You know that I am well up on the question of toilettes." [1]

It is doubtful whether these gifts were necessary to win the

[1] *Corresp.*, 13190.



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fair Marie. She was devoted to Alexander, and her dearest wish was to further his interests by being agreeable to his new ally. From this time on, Mme. Narischkine ably assisted the envoy in his social campaign, and procured his admission to many new salons.

After three months of residence at the capital, Savary was finally able to send a full detailed report of his labors, entitled: *Notes upon the Court of Russia and Saint Petersburg.*[1] He states that it is necessary at any price to gain the Empress *mère* and her salon. As to the method of procedure, he is uncertain, but it is sufficiently important for the Emperor to give it his careful consideration. Savary states that he thinks the Empress Marie is very sensible to personal attentions. Every mark of deference is precious to her, and the smallest gifts are appreciated. He had remarked, among her cherished souvenirs, a service of Sèvres sent by Louis the Sixteenth, and tapestries given by Louis the Fifteenth to Catherine. He is sure that similar gifts, if of good taste, and discreetly offered, will be highly appreciated, coming from the extraordinary man who fixes the attention of the world. "It is the elegance in the choice," he says, "and the grace in the manner of giving which above all fix the value of such things."

Another point upon which he insists is that the new French ambassador shall keep open house, and entertain lavishly, if he is to overcome the resistance of the diplomatic corps, and particularly of the British and Austrian ministers, the centres of the opposition. Lord Gower, the English ambassador, had the finest horses in Petersburg, the most luxurious equipages, the best table, a retinue superior to that of many German princes, and the Russian nobility were most susceptible to his influences. When the time came for Alexander to break with Great Britain and dismiss her minister, it was most important for the Emperor to have a representative capable of filling the void. He must be a man of great charm, of ancient name, capable of entertaining sumptuously, of magnificent presence, who would fear no rival.

[1] Published by Vandal in *Revue d'histoire diplomatique* 1er juillet 1890.

The choice of an ambassador at Saint Petersburg had troubled Napoleon very much, and it was several months before he reached a final decision. In the light of Savary's last report, he made up his mind to go outside the regular diplomatic corps, and send Caulaincourt, another of his aides de camp. He could not have made a better choice. Born in 1773, of a noble family, Caulaincourt early entered the army, and did not emigrate during the Revolution. In 1800, he was colonel in the Army of the Rhine, and after the peace of Lunéville, the following year, was sent by the First Consul to Saint Petersburg, to negotiate an understanding between Russia and France. In 1804, at the time of the arrest of the Duc d'Enghien in Baden territory, he was sent by Napoleon with an explanatory note to the Grand Duke, which led to the charge that he was concerned in the execution of that prince, an accusation against which he never ceased to protest. On the founding of the Empire, he became Grand Écuyer, and in that capacity accompanied the Emperor during the campaigns of Austerlitz, Jena, and Friedland, and was present at Tilsit. Although attached by name and traditions to the Bourbon monarchy, he had given to the new régime many proofs of his devotion. A man of fine mind, of open and upright character, of distinguished presence, Caulaincourt was devoted to the Emperor, for whom he displayed a chivalrous attachment. His tastes, which were naturally elevated, inclined toward elegance and luxury. Napoleon rightly judged that no one at his Court, or on his staff, was better fitted to fill, not only with dignity, but with *éclat*, the first post in the French diplomatic service. In a letter under date of the first of November he announced his choice to Savary in these words: "I shall certainly send Caulaincourt." Several days later the appointment was officially proclaimed, in spite of the strong objections of Caulaincourt. He bore the title of Ambassador Extraordinary, and was granted a salary of 800,000 francs, with 250,000 additional for expenses of installation. He was to be accompanied by a carefully chosen staff of secretaries and attachés, and was ordered to conduct the embassy

on a luxurious scale, in order to captivate Russian society.

To prepare the way for his new ambassador, Napoleon spared no pains. He offered to purchase the wood, and have three French vessels constructed in the Russian shipyards. He promised the army of the Czar fifty thousand guns of a new model, and opened the French ports to cadets desirous of completing their naval education. At the suggestion of Savary he laid plans to establish a French theatre at Petersburg, and ordered Talleyrand [1] to provide actors. To the Czar, he sent a handsome service of Sèvres. At the same time he began a direct, intimate correspondence with Alexander, in the effort to prolong at a distance the cordial friendship of Tilsit.

From all these acts, it is possible to infer that Napoleon lacked entire confidence in his new ally, and already considered the possibility of Russia's return to her former attitude. While cultivating the friendship of the Czar, and gathering all the fruits of his alliance, he was constantly on his guard against a new defection.

[1] As Grand Chamberlain, he had charge of the theatres.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 1807

## THE BREAK WITH ENGLAND

England Rejects the Czar's Mediation — Her Government Decides upon a Decisive Step — Seizure of the Danish Fleet — Results of This Attack — Napoleon Urges Alexander to Declare War — Protest of the Czar — He Is Angered by an English Brochure — Roumiantsof, Minister of Foreign Affairs — His Career and Policy — Alexander Demands the Principalities — Napoleon's Attitude — He Asks for Silesia — Reasons for His Course — Formal Instructions to Caulaincourt

IN ACCORDANCE with the agreement at Tilsit, the Czar had offered his mediation at London. Under date of the 29 August the British Government replied that it desired first of all to know "the just and equitable principles upon which France intended to negotiate"; it also demanded that there should be communicated to it the secret articles of the Treaty of Tilsit. As it was impossible, under the agreement with Napoleon, to comply with this latter request, the English answer in fact rejected the mediation.

In spite of the best efforts of her secret spies, England had been able to obtain only a vague idea of the arrangements entered into at Tilsit. Reduced to conjecture, the Government imagined that, as had happened six years before, after Marengo, Napoleon and Alexander proposed to form a league with Sweden and Denmark to combat the British supremacy on the seas. In this alliance, Denmark, with her powerful fleet, and nation of sailors, seemed destined to play the principal rôle. To anticipate these plans, England resolved to strike a decisive blow.[1] It is impossible to deny that the British Cabinet had penetrated the secret thoughts of Napoleon, and had only anticipated his probable action, but the brutal manner in which the project was carried out, and the violation of treaties, inspired universal sympathy for the victim.

[1] *Cf.* Mowat, 187

Early in August, an English army was landed in Denmark, and a fleet of thirty-seven vessels, under the command of Parker and Nelson took up its station before Copenhagen. The first of September, after several summons had been courageously refused, the bombardment of the city began, and continued for five days. Then, after the partial destruction of the capital by fire, and the deaths of hundreds of citizens, Copenhagen surrendered, and Nelson seized and carried away the Danish fleet.

The Emperor was enraged at the news of this dastardly attack, but it only moved him to close tighter the barrier of the Continental blockade. One of the characteristic traits of Napoleon was a prodigious faculty of evolving according to circumstances, of continually modifying and renewing his designs, in view of the varying course of events. In the destruction of the Danish fleet he saw an opportunity of bringing renewed pressure on Russia to close the North to English goods, while he himself took charge of the South. The indirect results of the bombardment of Copenhagen were to be the occupation of the Iberian Peninsula by French troops, and the Spanish War, which so drained the resources of the Emperor.

In a letter to Alexander, the last of September, Napoleon said: "I think that it will be easy for us to expel them [the English] entirely from the Continent: a joint declaration will produce that effect." [1] Two weeks later, Champagny, who had succeeded Talleyrand as Minister of Foreign Affairs, in a long despatch to Savary reminds him that Russia had undertaken to declare war on the first of December, and adds: "The ports of Portugal and of Sweden ought also to be closed by agreement or by force. Naturally, France should take charge of those of Portugal, and Russia of those of Sweden. The two Courts should take concerted action with the Cabinet of Vienna to make it embrace the common cause." [2] This last demand was anticipated by Austria, who promptly recalled her ambassador from London. On the

[1] *Corresp.*, 13191.
[2] Archives, *Russie* 144.

7 November, Napoleon ordered Savary to communicate this news to Alexander, and said: "It will be shameful for Russia . . . to have been behindhand, but I hope that Lord Gower is already dismissed." [1]

Upon receipt of the first news from Copenhagen, the Czar had sent Gower a formal note of protest, and had informed Savary at the same time that he was ready to act as soon as the Emperor gave the signal. But it is more than doubtful whether Alexander was sincere in his statements. For some time England had maintained at Saint Petersburg an agent by the name of Sir Robert Wilson, who had gained a high position in the society of the capital. Well received everywhere, Wilson had posed as the antagonist of Savary, whom he termed "the executioner of the Duc d'Enghien." [2]

But Wilson over-reached himself in his intrigues. He introduced into Russia a brochure, entitled *Reflections on the Peace of Tilsit*, which contained, besides the usual attacks on France, some very scurrilous passages regarding Alexander. Savary finally succeeded in procuring a copy, and, the next day, when invited to dine with the Czar, laid the pamphlet before him. After reading it, Alexander displayed as much grief as indignation, "against the traitors whom he encountered everywhere in his path, against the agents incapable of understanding and serving him." [3] In parting with Savary, he promised a severe admonition to the guilty parties, and this time his deed was as good as his word. He immediately dismissed two of his ministers; returned without reading a letter from Wilson, and issued a few days later, on the 7 November, a fulminating declaration against the British Government, declaring a suspension of relations, and indicating the declaration of war. Thus, more than three weeks before the date fixed at Tilsit, and before receiving the urgent appeal of his ally, a libelous brochure led the Czar to break with England. Great credit was undoubtedly due to

[1] *Corresp.*, 13339.
[2] 2 Wilson, 319.
[3] Report of Savary, 4 November 1807.

Savary for the ability with which he had handled a very difficult situation.

A change in the ministry about this time also had an important bearing upon Russian policy. Against his violent protests, Roumiantsof, the Minister of Commerce, was given also the portfolio of Foreign Affairs. Nicolas Roumiantsof [1] was the most glorious survivor of another age. Distinguished for a long time by honorable services, possessed of an immense fortune, highly esteemed at Court, grand seigneur in every sense of the term, he brought a new dignity to his office. He accepted the position, although with regret, because he saw a great opportunity to serve his country.

Roumiantsof was a statesman of the old school, who considered that the true interests of Russia lay to the Orient, along the Danube and the Black Sea, and was opposed to the modern idea of mingling in the quarrels of the Continent. Born in 1754, son of a distinguished general of the Seven Years' War, who had been the first to carry the Imperial eagles beyond the Danube, Nicolas preserved the recollections of the glorious days of the great Catherine.

At the début of the new reign, when Russia exhausted her resources in a vain struggle against the power of Napoleon, instead of following in the steps of Catherine along the Danube, Roumiantsof took but little part in public affairs. The Treaty of Tilsit, which indicated a return toward an Oriental policy, seemed to mark him as the man destined to take the head of the Foreign Office. Called to power, he brought to his office more decided views than those of his master, more audacity, and more foresight. He was even more inclined than Alexander to a partition of Turkey, and saw in the East a favorable opportunity to secure a notable increase of territory.

From the first, Roumiantsof showed himself opposed to the projects of Wilson and friendly to France. He tried to secure a copy of the famous brochure, to lay it before the Czar, but was not successful. He encouraged Alexander to take a

[1] His name frequently appears in the French despatches under the form of Romanzof.

decided stand, and was very influential in bringing about the final rupture with Great Britain.

But it was soon evident that the Czar expected to receive his reward for the action he had taken. After having announced to Savary the break with England, he abruptly turned the conversation to the Orient, and recalled the terms in which Napoleon, at Tilsit, had spoken of the dismemberment of Turkey. He asked Savary to transmit formally to the Emperor his demand for the two Principalities: he wished to unite Moldavia and Wallachia to his Empire, regardless of any final decision as to the partition of the Ottoman Empire.

"This matter is very interesting to me," wrote Napoleon at this time, "but it is necessary to proceed very slowly." [1] The difficulty was to satisfy Alexander, while at the same time conserving the interests of France. In the pursuit of this end, one idea dominated him: not to permit any aggrandizement of Russia without an equal advantage for France. In view of all the French conquests, this conception seems illogical to the last degree. In the balance of the profits to each country, Napoleon is not willing to take into consideration Italy, where he is annexing the province of Tuscany, nor Spain and Portugal, which he already contemplates bringing within the sphere of his influence.

In 1805, Napoleon had vanquished Russia and Austria, without Prussia; in 1806 and 1807 he had beaten Prussia and Russia, without Austria. The reports of Savary had convinced him that the Russian alliance depended entirely upon the personal friendship of the Czar, and might be broken at any moment. He knew also that with Russia there was no midway between intimacy and bad terms, between alliance and war. A rupture with Russia would certainly add that nation to the list of his foes, and a conflict with the three great Continental Powers would be so unequal as to endanger the Imperial establishment. He already regretted having yielded at Tilsit to the insistence of the Czar, and abandoned his first thought of destroying the Prussian monarchy, thereby violating the

[1] *Corresp.*, 13318.

precept of the Great Frederick: "Ne jamais maltraiter un adversaire à demi."

The Grand Army had as yet retired but a step: it was still quartered between the Elbe and the Vistula. Königsberg had been restored to the King, but the French still occupied the rest of the Kingdom. The indemnity of one hundred and fifty millions which Napoleon demanded was beyond the resources of Prussia, and until it was paid he had the right to continue the French occupation.

The Emperor was already considering a means of fortifying himself permanently against the hostility of Prussia, when the demands of the Czar brought him a ray of light. As the Czar, in violation of the terms arranged at Tilsit, insisted on keeping the two Turkish provinces occupied by his troops, why should not the Emperor, in assuring to his ally Moldavia and Wallachia, return to his first idea, and demand of Prussia the province of Silesia? In losing Silesia, Prussia would be reduced to the limits of the former electorate of Brandenburg. After having stolen provinces from all her neighbors, the Hohenzollerns would be thrown back into the cradle of their race. Despoiled of her richest lands, reduced to a nation of two million souls, Prussia would be unable to maintain a large army, and would become only a second-class Power. United to Saxony and the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, Silesia would materially strengthen the defences of the Empire. In applying this policy to Prussia, Napoleon would only be following the example set by Frederick himself, who was the instigator and the most active agent in the partition of Poland some thirty-five years before.

Napoleon decided to communicate this new plan immediately to Alexander, and it formed the principal clause in the instructions to Caulaincourt, who was to broach the subject as soon as he arrived at Saint Petersburg. This remarkable document, prepared by Champagny, but reviewed and approved by the Emperor, clearly reveals the line of his thought. The solemn act of Tilsit could not be modified to the advantage of only one of the parties; an infraction allowed in the

case of Russia should be balanced by one to the profit of France. "Such would be the principle of the conduct of the Emperor. Reason, justice, prudence, would not allow him to take any other course, and no obstacle could turn him from this path." As long as Russia remained in the Principalities, France would continue the occupation of Prussia, unless the cession of Silesia gave her another guarantee. The alternative was therefore offered to Prussia of remaining a prisoner of war for an indefinite term or of securing her liberty by the sacrifice of a province.

If the Czar agreed to this proposition, a convention modifying the treaty would be secretly exchanged between the two sovereigns. Napoleon would undertake to arrange the matter with the Sultan, and Alexander would do the same with Frederick-William. The two matters would be negotiated simultaneously.

In the event that the Czar insisted upon a further partition of Turkey, Caulaincourt was instructed not to offer any opposition, but to state that this step would necessitate a new interview, and direct negotiations between the two emperors. A note upon the margin of the ambassador's instructions, with the words "dictated by the Emperor," throws further light on the subject: "Thus, the real desire of the Emperor at this moment is that the Ottoman Empire shall remain in its *present* integrity [*i.e.* excluding the Principalities already occupied by the Czar] . . . provided Russia agrees that France shall acquire from Prussia an equal augmentation."

To sum up, Napoleon suggested three plans for settling the question:

First, a peace securing to Turkey the restitution of all her provinces, including Moldavia and Wallachia.

Second, the abandonment to Russia of the Principalities, on condition of the cession of Silesia to France.

Third, the partition of the Ottoman Empire, provided the two emperors arranged the matter at a personal interview.

The instructions end with these words: "Such are the intentions of the Emperor upon this important question of

policy. What he would prefer above all is that the Turks should remain in peaceful possession of Wallachia and Moldavia. However, the desire to use tact in dealing with [*ménager*] the Cabinet of Saint Petersburg, and to attach more strongly the Emperor Alexander, does not preclude the abandonment of the two provinces in consideration of a just compensation to be secured in the provinces of Prussia; finally, although very reluctant to the partition of the Turkish Empire, and regarding that measure as calamitous, it is not his wish that, in your explanation to the Emperor and his minister, you should absolutely condemn it, but he directs you to represent forcibly the reasons which should defer that epoch. This ancient project of Russian ambition is a bond which may attach Russia to France, and, from this point of view, you must take care not to discourage entirely her hopes." [1]

[1] See *Revue d'histoire diplomatique*, 1er janvier 1890; also 1 Vandal, Appendice II.

## CHAPTER SIX

### 1808

## THE EASTERN QUESTION

Tolstoi Appointed Ambassador to France — His Prussian Sympathies — Napoleon Forced to Explain His Policy — Cordial Reception of Caulaincourt by the Czar — Alexander's Views Regarding Silesia — Caulaincourt's First Despatches — Russia Fears the Reëstablishment of Poland — Napoleon Again Feels the Appeal of the Orient — His Conferences with Talleyrand — England Refuses to Make Peace — Napoleon's Famous Letter of 2 February — Was He Sincere? — Joy of Alexander — Renewed Suspicions — Remarkable Negotiations between Roumiantsof and Caulaincourt — The Ambassador's Reports and Letters on the Subject

IN DECIDING upon his ambassador, the Czar had as much trouble as Napoleon; and the selection which he finally made of General Tolstoi, the brother of the grand marshal, was most unfortunate. Comte Tolstoi had passed the greater part of his life in the army, and when not in active service had lived upon his estates, far from the social and political intrigues of the capital. Although he was not considered a partisan of the French, Alexander thought that his military training, and habits of obedience to orders, would fit him for his new career.

On his way to Paris, Tolstoi stopped at Memel to pay his respects to the royal family of Prussia, and was much impressed by the spectacle of their misery. The King and Queen were living in a state of poverty, and the sympathies of Tolstoi were aroused. He therefore arrived in France with sentiments very different from those which Napoleon expected in the ambassador of his ally.

On the 6 November, four days before the date set for the departure of Caulaincourt, Tolstoi arrived at Fontainebleau, where the Court was then in residence, and presented his credentials. He was received with every mark of kindness

and distinction by the Emperor. At Paris, Napoleon purchased for a million francs the handsome hôtel of Murat in Rue Cerutti, and presented it to the ambassador for his official residence.

But to all the advances of Napoleon, Tolstoi remained unresponsive. At his first interview with the Emperor, he brought up the question of the evacuation of Prussia, and flatly stated that there could be no peace between Russia and France so long as the first condition of the Treaty of Tilsit was not fulfilled. He was so insistent that Napoleon, much against his will, was forced to explain his position. Tolstoi at once reported the interview to his master, with much exaggeration, stating that the Emperor demanded not only Silesia, but also Berlin and the line of the Oder, with the idea of rounding out the kingdom of *Monsieur* Jérôme, as he called him. Not content with expressing his fears in several reports, he made them the subject of a personal letter to Roumiantsof. Thus, by a combination of unfortunate circumstances, before the arrival of his ambassador, the plans of Napoleon were revealed to Alexander in a most unfavorable light. When Caulaincourt reached Saint Petersburg, therefore, he found the Czar suspicious and upset, and his task far more difficult than he had anticipated.

Notwithstanding the doubts which oppressed his mind, Alexander gave Caulaincourt a most cordial welcome. On his arrival the ambassador was conducted to the Wolkonski Palace, the most magnificent in the capital after those of the Czar and the Grand Duke, and was told to consider it as his own. On the 20 December, Caulaincourt presented his credentials, and the same evening was invited to a spectacle at the Hermitage, where he was seated beside the grand dukes in the same line with the Imperial family, "a distinction without precedent, which impressed the whole Court."

Two days later, Caulaincourt was invited by the Czar to one of his intimate private dinners, after which they passed into his cabinet, where they had a long conversation, which the ambassador recounts in his despatches in the form of a dialogue.

CAULAINCOURT, DUC DE VICENCE

After expressing to Caulaincourt his pleasure and satisfaction over the Emperor's appointment, and a few words on other topics, Alexander plunged into the subject of Prussia, and said that he could not consider Silesia in connection with the affairs of Turkey. Caulaincourt then explained the real intentions of the Emperor, which had been so distorted by Tolstoi in his reports. Alexander admitted that he presented the case well, but went on to say: "I can never enter into an arrangement of which there never was any question between us, and which would despoil a prince who has already lost so much . . . I do not doubt the intentions of your Emperor, but it is necessary here to have something to prove to the nation and the army that our alliance is not solely to your advantage."

At the end of this interview Caulaincourt left the Czar in better humor, but not convinced. He had touched lightly upon the three points in his instructions. He had spoken of a peace with Turkey which would leave everything as before: the Czar had made no response. He had alluded twice to an exchange of Silesia against the Principalities: Alexander had been courteous, but inflexible. Finally, he had suggested a personal interview between the two emperors, to discuss the partition of Turkey, and found that while the Czar was ready for this, he was not willing to sacrifice Prussia.[1]

In following interviews, the Czar showed himself even more cordial and open. Appreciating the tact and discretion of Caulaincourt, he spoke without reserve of his "bonnes fortunes," and particularly of Madame Narischkine. Then he changed the subject to Napoleon and was frankly curious to know about the private life of the Emperor. He also flattered the amour-propre of the ambassador by asking him to tell the story of a love affair which Caulaincourt had had before leaving Paris, and expressed his good wishes for the minister's success.

Ten days after his arrival, Caulaincourt gives his impressions of the situation, as he sees it, in a very frank letter to the

[1] See Caulaincourt's Report of 23 December 1807.

Emperor. "Sire," he writes Napoleon on the 31 December, "the alliance of Russia with Your Majesty, and especially the war with England, have upset all the ideas of this country; it is, one may say, a change of religion." The ambassador then goes on to say that Alexander considers himself in honor bound to procure for Russia advantages in the Orient in exchange for the sacrifices imposed by the war with England. "Such," he continues, "is his position, or rather his embarrassment, for his chivalry closes the door of escape which Your Majesty opens for him by way of Prussia . . . The Emperor will certainly triumph over all these obstacles if he does not change his mind, but if he thinks that he has been deceived . . . no one can calculate the consequences of his reflections."

When better informed, a little later, Caulaincourt became convinced that the policy of the Czar was not dictated by sentimental reasons only. If he obstinately refused to yield on the question of Silesia, it was less from sympathy for Prussia than from anxiety for his own interests. Alexander and Roumiantsof had divined that Napoleon intended to use that province to strengthen the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, and they feared that this annexation was only a prelude to the reëstablishment of Poland. If the Czar and his minister spoke continually of Prussia, they thought all the time of Poland, and it was their dread of seeing that country rise from its ashes which was destined to have in the future a fatal effect upon their understanding with Napoleon. In this arrière-pensée can be found the secret of their vehement opposition to the project of Silesia. "The demand for Berlin would alarm them less," wrote Caulaincourt.[1]

Even at this early date the Russian alliance had reached a crisis. "The two questions which for a century past had prevented a durable *rapprochement* between France and Russia, the Orient and Poland, reappeared to-day, raised simultaneously; and Napoleon, in trying to solve the first by the second, had only succeeded in complicating them . . . If it

[1] Letter to the Emperor, 17 February 1808.

were still possible to save the situation, it was only on condition that Napoleon dissipated the suspicions of Russia, and at the same time satisfied her ambitions: it had become necessary to reassure her on the subject of Poland — urgent to satisfy her at the expense of Turkey." [1]

During his visit to Italy, in December 1807, even before the arrival of Caulaincourt at Saint Petersburg, Napoleon learned from the despatches of Savary that the Czar, while clinging to the Principalities, refused to consent to the annexation of Silesia. The only means of satisfying Russia and indemnifying France was therefore the partition of Turkey by common agreement. At Venice, Napoleon found himself almost upon the frontiers of the Ottoman Empire, and the appeal of the Orient awakened once more in his breast. This, as much as the demands of Russia, lessened his objections to the great undertaking. He wrote Savary at this time: "My first aim, like the first sentiment of my heart, is to modify my policy in such a way as to bring my interests into accord with those of the Emperor Alexander." [2] These words seem to imply the abandonment of Turkey.

On his return to Paris, the first day of January 1808, without taking any rest, Napoleon sent for Talleyrand and discussed the Eastern question for five hours. Although Talleyrand had given up the portfolio of Foreign Affairs in becoming Vice-grand-électeur, the Emperor liked to take his advice, and kept him in reserve for consultations on political matters of importance. It was remarked that Napoleon had several more long conferences with his former minister during the next few days, and much curiosity was aroused. The subject discussed on each occasion was the same, and the Emperor, against the advice of Talleyrand, displayed a strong inclination to go ahead with the partition plan.[3] Napoleon's determination to achieve a definite peace with England had become so strong that it had overpowered his usual clear

[1] 1 Vandal, 218–219. [2] *Corresp.*, 13384.
[3] See 2 Metternich, 144–150.

judgment, and he was ready to resort to any means, no matter how extraordinary or superhuman, to gain his end. First of all he was resolved to close the Continent to British goods, and the Spanish question then began to take form in his mind, alongside the Eastern plan. In Spain, he was still wavering between two policies: whether to overthrow the reigning dynasty, or to make it the instrument of his power. In the Orient, he was considering the idea of striking at England through a menace to her Indian Empire.

While Napoleon was still in this state of indecision, the last of January the English Parliament was opened, with the usual address from the throne, which breathed an indomitable spirit of tenacity, and a determination to carry on the struggle to the bitter end: "His Majesty commands us to assure you of his firm persuasion that, with the aid of divine Providence, Great Britian will come out of this conflict with glory and success." [1]

When Napoleon read this proud defiance, he was filled with rage. He immediately made up his mind to accept the gage of battle, to associate himself more closely with the great empire of the North, and to yield even Constantinople to Alexander as the price of his coöperation. It was in this spirit that he wrote the Czar the famous letter of the second of February 1808: [2]

"Monsieur mon frère, General Savary has just arrived. I have passed whole hours with him in talking of Your Majesty . . . Your Majesty will have seen the late addresses to the English Parliament and the decision arrived at to push the war *à outrance*. In this state of affairs, I am writing directly to Caulaincourt. If Your Majesty will condescend to talk with him, he will state my opinions. It is no longer possible, except by grand and vast measures, for us to arrive at peace and consolidate our systems. . . .

"An army of 50,000 men, Russian, French, and perhaps a few Austrians, which is directed on Asia by way of Con-

[1] *Moniteur*, 2 February 1808.
[2] 16 *Corresp.*, 586.

stantinople, will not have arrived upon the Euphratus before alarming England and putting her at the feet of the Continent. I am in force in Dalmatia; Your Majesty, on the Danube. A month after we are in accord, the army could be on the Bosphorus. The blow will echo to the Indies, and England will submit. I do not refuse any of the preliminary stipulations necessary to reach so great an end. But the reciprocal interests of our two States must be combined and balanced. This can be done only in an interview with Your Majesty, or pursuant to sincere conferences between Roumiantsof and Caulaincourt, and the sending here of a man in sympathy with our system. M. de Tolstoi is an estimable man, but he is full of prejudices and mistrust against France . . . All can be signed and decided before the 15 March. By the first of May, our troops can be in Asia, and by the same time, the troops of Your Majesty at Stockholm. Then, the English, menaced in the Indies, driven from the Levant, will be crushed under the weight of the events with which the atmosphere will be charged."

This letter, of which we have quoted only the principal paragraphs, did not refer to the question of partition, but the one sent Caulaincourt on the same day formally admits it, and explicitly orders him to enter into the details of the plan.

The reason for this sudden *volte-face* in Napoleon's policy hardly seems adequate, and leads one to doubt his sincerity. Did not the appeal to the Czar conceal a piece of trickery? While he was charming Alexander with this magnificent perspective of Oriental conquests, was he not seeking to gain time to carry out his designs on Spain, the only question which seriously preoccupied him at the moment? As soon as the fate of the Peninsula was decided, and Europe confronted with a *fait accompli*, did he not intend to retract insensibly his offers, and allow to fade away the mirage so eloquently evoked?

In spite of what he says in this letter to Alexander, and his instructions to Caulaincourt, it is also doubtful whether Napoleon had then decided upon a plan of partition; certainly, he had not communicated it to his ambassador, any

more than he told the general ordered to open fire, at the beginning of a battle, the secret of the operations destined to decide the fate of the day. In diplomacy, as in war, his methods varied little. He opened the battle all along the line; then, as the combat deepened, and he divined the weak point of his adversary, he brought up all his reserves, and prevailed over the enemy already worn out by the conflict.

In the question of the partition, these tactics are very evident. The debate to open at Saint Petersburg was no more than a preliminary skirmish, to feel out the enemy. Upon certain points, he was determined not to yield: on others, he was resigned to concessions more or less important. Based upon certain passages in the *Mémorial*, it is the general belief that Napoleon never contemplated abandoning Constantinople to Russia. At Saint Helena he said: "Constantinople is placed to be the centre and the seat of universal domination." [1] Nevertheless, Metternich and Tolstoi [2] have both stated that he accepted the idea of the establishment of Russia on the Bosphorus; and in 1812, in a conversation with Narbonne, he admitted that he had offered the city to Alexander. The contradiction between these different statements can easily be explained by the different circumstances under which they were made. At Saint Helena, Napoleon was talking for posterity; in 1808, he was demanding the aid of Russia, to give the finishing blow to England, and was willing to pay the necessary price.

The King of Sweden had refused to yield to the demands, even to the menaces, of Russia, and close his ports to English goods. Caulaincourt accordingly called on the Czar to fulfill his agreements and declare war. Alexander did not refuse, but was very slow in his preparations, and gave many excuses for his failure to move. Up to this time the Czar had taken no aggressive act against England, and he now hesitated to attack her ally until he was entirely reassured as to Napoleon's

[1] Las Cases, 83.

[2] See Tolstoi's letter to Roumiantsof, 7 November 1807, Russian Archives; also 2 Metternich, 151–159.

intentions. He seemed to fear, if he took possession of Finland, that the Emperor might consider this conquest as an equivalent for the Turkish provinces which had been promised him. Finally, under the continued pressure of the French ambassador, Alexander gave the order for his troops to cross the frontier, and on the 15 February hostilities began.

Once more the Czar had kept his engagements, although no decisive word had yet been received from France. At last, on the 25 February, Napoleon's letter of the second reached Saint Petersburg. Caulaincourt hastened to the palace, and was granted an immediate audience. When he had finished reading the letter, which seemed to fill him with joy, the Czar seized Caulaincourt's hand, and, pressing it, said with emotion: "Tell your Emperor how much I am touched by his confidence, how much I desire to second him." He then read the letter to the ambassador, and continued: "General, I can tell you frankly that this letter gives me great pleasure: it is the language of Tilsit. The Emperor can count on me, for you know that I have not changed my tone." [1]

But the first feeling of enthusiasm soon gave place to distrust. Alexander and Roumiantsof began to doubt the sincerity of the Emperor. On the last day of February, Caulaincourt wrote that they feared that "the proposed partition was a method of changing the question and retaining Silesia, without giving Russia a chance to demand the reason." Alexander charged his minister to clear this matter up, and at the first conference between the two negotiators, the principal subject of the interview was the question of Prussia. Roumiantsof demanded the assurance that the new projects implied the express renunciation of all designs on Silesia. Unfortunately the French ambassador was not authorized to give this assurance. The following day, the first of March, Caulaincourt dined at the palace, and the Czar tried to draw him out, by assuming that the question was settled. He said: "I am delighted that the matter of Silesia is no longer in question. Frankly, the project for the

[1] Report of Caulaincourt.

partition of the Ottoman Empire should annul all that has been proposed and said regarding Prussia since Tilsit: that reëstablishes the question as it was consecrated by the treaty." The reply of Caulaincourt was summed up in a phrase borrowed from the instructions of his master: "The Emperor Napoleon urges Your Majesty not to press him more than you are pressed." [1]

On the important question of Constantinople, Alexander, at this time, displayed an unexpected moderation, and himself proposed that it should be made a free city.

The conferences between Roumiantsof and Caulaincourt began on the second of March and were continued from day to day. The negotiations, which were reported in great detail by the French ambassador, were certainly the most extraordinary ever recorded in the secret archives of any nation. The minister and the envoy met alone, and conversed in the most informal manner, at a table which was covered with the maps of Europe. With refined courtesy, and a tone of light amiability, they sought a solution of the most redoubtable problems ever raised in international politics; they divided up more territories, more provinces, more kingdoms than any congress known to history. With the maps spread out between them they debated whether the partition should, (1) take the form discussed at Tilsit, leaving Constantinople and Roumelia to the Turks, or (2) involve the entire division of Turkey in Europe, or (3) even go so far as to include the Ottoman possessions in Asia and Africa. During one of their interviews, Roumiantsof spoke of the *gouvernement invalide* of the Turks, which was probably the first use of the phrase, "the Sick Man of the East," so celebrated later.[2]

In transmitting to Napoleon the voluminous report, or rather *procès-verbal*, of his conferences, Caulaincourt, in a personal letter, gives a résumé of his impressions.[3] That which

[1] Report of Caulaincourt.

[2] Used by Nicholas I in conversation with the British ambassador Seymour.

[3] Letter of 16 March 1808.

strikes him most is the fact that the Russian Court, in spite of its joy over the offer of partition, is still full of suspicion. It still feels that the Silesian project conceals the design of the Emperor to reëstablish Poland upon the wreck of Prussia. This explains the persistence of the Czar and his minister in demanding a guarantee on the subject of Silesia. The only means of tranquillizing Alexander will be to evacuate Prussia, and above all, the Grand Duchy. The ambassador does not venture to recommend such a sacrifice but he does urge the Emperor to repress the ardor of the Poles, and abstain from any measures calculated, in the words of Alexander, "to revive the dead, and give the impression of a wish entirely to resurrect them." "In six months," writes Caulaincourt, "the embassy will be a canonry, if there is no longer a Silesian question, and if there is an understanding regarding the partition of the Ottoman Empire."

Alexander, by this time, had changed his ideas regarding Constantinople, and the ambassador records his conviction that the Czar will never yield on the point of that city and the Dardanelles: this double question arranged to his satisfaction, all else would be easy. Master of Constantinople, he would go with the Emperor, not only to the Indies, but also to Syria and Egypt, and place his armies and his fleets at the disposal of France. Caulaincourt's letter of the 16 March concludes with these remarkable words: "Let Your Majesty reunite Italy to France, perhaps even Spain; change dynasties; found kingdoms; demand the coöperation of the Black Sea fleet, and of a territorial army to conquer Egypt; demand whatever guarantees you wish; make any exchanges you wish with England: in a word let the world change its place, provided Russia obtains Constantinople and the Dardanelles, we could, I think, make her contemplate all without disquietude."

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### 1808

## THE SPANISH REVOLT

Reasons for Napoleon's Intervention in Spain — Project for the Partition of Portugal — Junot Takes Lisbon — Flight of the Royal Family — The Spanish Alliance — Manifesto of Godoy — Alexander Supports Napoleon — Conditions in Spain — The French Troops Cross the Frontier — Napoleon Annexes the Northern Provinces — Murat Placed in Command — The King Abdicates — Murat Enters Madrid — Napoleon's Remarkable Letter — He Goes to Bayonne — Arrival of the Spanish Royal Family — Revolt at Madrid — Napoleon Refuses to Recognize Ferdinand — Spain Ceded to the Emperor — Joseph Proclaimed King — A General Revolt — Victory of Bessières — Surrender of Dupont — Effects of This Disaster — Evacuation of Portugal

THE intervention in Spain is generally regarded as the greatest mistake ever made by Napoleon, and he himself admitted at Saint Helena that it was the principal cause of his downfall.[1] But it is never entirely fair to judge events by their final results. Louis the Fourteenth, a century earlier, had thought it good policy to abolish the Pyrenees, and this step was even more justified under the Empire. The Continental System demanded that the entire Peninsula should be freed from the influence of England; that Portugal, a vassal of Great Britain, should be brought under French control; that Spain should be linked to France by ties so strong that she would no longer be subject to the caprices of a feeble monarch and a frivolous court. This was certainly a sane and sound policy: the only means of reforming and revitalizing the Spanish nation was to bring it under the dominion of France. But such remedies required great tact and moderation: it was not possible to impose a foreign supremacy upon a proud people by force of arms. Thus far, in his career, Napoleon had dealt only with kings and princes: in Spain, for the first time, he was to en-

[1] *Mémorial*, 14 June 1816.

counter a nation. A people capable of enduring the degrading authority of a royal favorite like Godoy did not seem worthy of much consideration; but behind him was the old race of kings, identified with the nation, and deep down in the hearts of the people was a strong spirit of independence from foreign domination. This sentiment, when outraged, manifested itself in a surprising manner. Thus, through blunders in execution, a measure of prudence and sound politics, turned into a profound calamity.

By agreement with the Czar, under the secret articles of the Treaty of Tilsit, Napoleon had called upon the Court of Portugal to enforce the Continental System, under penalty of being treated as an enemy. At that time, an English squadron, under the command of Sidney Smith, was anchored in the Tagus, and the Government could not decide what course to pursue. The ambassadors of France and Spain, who were acting in accord, at once demanded their passports, and left Lisbon on the 2 October.

For three weeks, an army of observation of 25,000 men, under the command of Junot, had been assembled at Bayonne. On the 17 October, this army began its march, and crossed the frontier the following day. This movement showed that France counted upon the support of Spain, and in effect a treaty, negotiated with the Prince of Peace, was signed ten days later. This treaty provided for the partition of Portugal. Of the six provinces, of which the country was composed, Entre Douro E Mino, including the city of Oporto, was to be erected into a kingdom, under the name of Northern Lusitania, and given in exchange for Tuscany to the King of Etruria,[1] who was a grandson of the King of Spain. The two southern provinces of Alemtejo and Algarve were to be assigned to Godoy, with the title of Prince des Algarves. The three important provinces of Traz oz Montes, Beira and Estremadura, including the city of Lisbon, were to remain in the

[1] Louis, son of Ferdinand, Duke of Parma, had married Maria Louisa, daughter of Charles the Fourth of Spain. His establishment in Tuscany (Etruria) was part of the bargain by which France obtained Louisiana.

hands of the French until the conclusion of a general peace. The colonial possessions of Portugal were to be divided between the two contracting parties.[1]

The French expeditionary forces were to be supported by an army of 11,000 Spaniards; and another clause of the treaty provided that a French army of 40,000 men should assemble at Bayonne, to be ready to enter Portugal in case England intervened.

In less than four weeks, Junot was at Salamanca, where, on the 13 November, he received an order from the Emperor to hasten his march on the capital, without losing a single hour, in order to anticipate the English. The same day, an article in the *Moniteur* announced the dethronement of the House of Braganza.[2]

After a terrible forced march, during which his troops endured every kind of privation, Junot arrived at Lisbon on the last day of November. Such was the terror of the French arms that this city of 300,000 souls, with a garrison of 14,000 men, supported by the English fleet, promptly surrendered. Before the arrival of Junot, the royal family embarked on the British vessels, and set sail for Brazil, to establish a colonial empire. Junot entered the capital with less than two thousand men fit for service, without cannon or baggage. During the next few days, the remainder of his troops came straggling in, pale and worn from their forced march, their uniforms in tatters, and their guns rusted. The artillery followed, and before the Portuguese had recovered from their surprise, the army of Junot, united and rested, had assumed the usual imposing attitude of the Imperial forces. A few days later, the country was entirely occupied.

For eleven years following the Treaty of Bâle, Spain had remained faithful to the French alliance, but suddenly, in October 1806, at the commencement of hostilities between Prussia and France, there appeared a proclamation by the

[1] Treaty of Fontainebleau, 27 October 1807. 2 De Clercq, 235.

[2] *Moniteur*, 13 November 1807 — "The Prince Regent of Portugal is losing his throne . . ."

Prince of Peace, calling upon all Spaniards to take up arms against an enemy who was not designated.[1] After Jena, Napoleon demanded an explanation, and pretended to accept the excuses of Godoy; but as a matter of assurance he required Spain to send a contingent of 18,000 men under Romana to join the Grand Army in Poland. During the conferences at Tilsit, the action of Spain was undoubtedly discussed, and the Czar gave Napoleon free hand to deal with the situation as he saw fit. At that date the Emperor had no fixed plan in his mind, but the disgraceful quarrels and strange events at Madrid finally led him to intervene actively, and step by step drew him into this unfortunate enterprise.

For many years Spain had been in a state of decline, and at the end of the eighteenth century the great empire of Charles-Quint had fallen to the rank of a second-class Power. The sovereignty was divided between an incapable king, a dissolute queen, and an insolent favorite. The fourth member of this interesting group was the heir to the throne, Ferdinand, Prince of the Asturias, who hated the favorite, Godoy, and who was in turn equally detested by his ignoble mother and her lover.

The kingdom was divided into two factions: the adherents of the King, and those of the heir to the throne. A conspiracy was formed, ostensibly directed against Godoy, but probably intended to overthrow the King. This plot was revealed to Charles the Fourth, who placed himself at the head of his guards, and on the night of the 29 October 1807 arrested Ferdinand in his apartment at the Escurial.

In this crisis, both parties sought the support of Napoleon, who at that time was very popular in Spain, but the Emperor replied that he would not under any circumstances become involved in this disgraceful intrigue. At the same time he rebuked his ambassador, Beauharnais, who had taken part in the plot, with the hope that Ferdinand would marry his niece, Mlle. Tascher de la Pagerie, who later became the Princesse d'Aremberg.

[1] Du Pradt, 15.

The treaty signed at Fontainebleau on the 27 October contained a stipulation, already referred to, that an army of observation, forty thousand strong, should be concentrated at Bayonne, but it was only to enter Spain in case the British landed in Portugal. This movement, also, was not to take place without the coöperation of Spain. However, without any news of the English, and without any consultation with Spain, on the 22 November an army corps of 24,000 men, with 3500 cavalry, and 38 cannon, under the command of Dupont, crossed the frontier and went into cantonments along the Douro. This was followed, early in January, by another corps of about the same size commanded by Moncey. At the same time, other troops were directed on the Pyrenees, and Bayonne became a large camp.

This was not all. Received everywhere in Spain as friends and allies, the French took advantage of the confidence of the Spaniards to gain possession, by ruse or by force, of all the strong-places. The next move of the Emperor was to notify the Court of Madrid that the interests of France demanded the annexation to the Empire of all of Spain north of the Ebro, and that he would give in exchange the whole of Portugal! So vanished the dreams of the Prince of Peace; and at the same moment there arrived at Madrid the Queen of Etruria, who came to claim the kingdom promised her son in Portugal. All parties were enraged at this high-handed procedure, but there was nothing to do except to submit.

These easy triumphs did not arrest the movements of Napoleon. Another corps of 25,000 men, under Bessières, passed the Bidassoa, and on the 13 March, Murat, invested with the title of lieutenant of the Emperor, installed his headquarters at Burgos. Entrusted with the supreme command of an army of one hundred thousand men, Murat already dreamed of wearing the crown of Spain.

Alarmed at the course of events, the Court fled from Madrid to Aranjuez, where the King was seriously considering the idea of following the example of the royal family of Portugal, and leaving the country. When the news of this plan

leaked out, there was a popular uprising, the life of Godoy was menaced, and the feeble old King abdicated in favor of his son.[1]

In the meantime, the French army was slowly advancing on Madrid, and on the receipt of this news, Murat hastened his march. On the 23 March he entered the capital. The following day Ferdinand arrived, and received an enthusiastic welcome from his subjects.

When the news of all these events reached the Emperor, he sent Murat, under date of the 29 March, a most remarkable letter of instructions.[2] This letter proves conclusively that Napoleon was an entire stranger to the intrigues which had led to the abdication of Charles, and that he then had no fixed plan in his mind; it shows also the profound sagacity with which he at this time sized up the situation in the Peninsula, appreciating the difficulties, pointing out the dangers, foreseeing the explosion of national sentiment, and predicting with almost prophetic exactitude what would occur if a sensitive patriotism was aroused. After reading this letter it is difficult to understand why Napoleon later went so far beyond the limits which he had traced for himself. His hand seems to have been forced by unexpected circumstances, and his usual clear judgment carried away by the temptations of ambition.

On the 31 March, Napoleon received a letter from Charles the Fourth, in which he protested that his abdication was not voluntary, and appealed to the Emperor. Napoleon decided to go to Bayonne, in order to be in closer touch with the Spanish situation. Leaving Saint-Cloud on the second day of April, after a short stop at Bordeaux, he reached Bayonne on the fifteenth.

As if attracted by an invisible magnet, all the members of the royal family of Spain, including Godoy, were on their way

[1] On the 19 March 1808. Du Pradt, 63.

[2] This letter, first published by Las Cases in the *Mêmorial*, has been pronounced a forgery, but Thiers claims that it is genuine. See 2 Jomini, 371–374; also 2 Rose, 153, where it is considered a forgery.

to the same place, to meet the Emperor, and lay their cases before him. The first to arrive, on the 20 April, was Ferdinand, who dined that evening with Napoleon, at his château of Marrac. Ten days later, the King and Queen reached Bayonne, and were received with royal honors. They were visited immediately by the Emperor, who greeted them warmly, and used all of his powers of seduction. They had a conference with Napoleon, lasting over an hour, at which the fate of Spain was probably decided.

On the second of May, the Queen of Etruria and her children were to leave Madrid for Bayonne, where they had been summoned by the King. When the people learned that the last members of the royal family were about to leave the country, there was a violent uprising of the inhabitants of the capital, which was forcibly suppressed by Murat. When the news of the insurrection reached Bayonne, three days later, there was a terrible scene between the King and his son, in the presence of the Emperor, at which Charles overwhelmed Ferdinand with his reproaches. The prince remained silent under the storm of abuse from his father and mother, and finally the Emperor spoke:

"Prince," he said to Ferdinand, "the massacre at Madrid is the work of a party whom you cannot disavow. Therefore, I will never recognize as King of Spain one who violently broke the alliance with France, who ordered the murder of French soldiers, at the very moment that he came to request my sanction of the impious action by which he wished to mount the throne. I have no engagements except with the King, your father; it is he whom I regconize, and, if he so desires, I am going to escort him to Madrid." [1]

But the King had no desire to risk his life in such an enterprise, and absolutely declined Napoleon's offer. The situation was therefore entirely in the hands of the Emperor. The same day, Ferdinand resigned all of his claims to the crown, and Charles ceded to the Emperor his rights to the throne

[1] Quoted by Saint-Amand.

of Spain and the Indies, in consideration of an allowance of seven and a half millions of francs, and the use for his life of the imperial palace of Compiègne.[1] On the tenth, another convention was signed by Ferdinand, in which he renounced any rights which he might have to the throne.[2]

In all external forms, the acts of Bayonne were certainly as legal and as binding as the testament of Charles the Second, under which the grandson of Louis the Fourteenth became King of Spain. The semblance of legality was also increased by the assent of 150 official representatives of the nation, who were convened at Bayonne on the 15 June.

In the meantime Joseph had arrived at Bayonne, and by a decree, under date of the 6 June, the Emperor proclaimed his brother as King of Spain. Murat was sent to replace him upon the throne of Naples.

Napoleon thought that he had founded his rights on a contract in due form, but this agreement had not been ratified by the people, and they were not slow in repudiating it. At a later date, no one appreciated better than the Emperor himself the causes and the effects of the Peninsula War, or more nobly excused the Spaniards. At Saint Helena he said: "I expected their benedictions, but the result was otherwise: they disdained their interests, to consider only their injuries; they became indignant at the idea of the offense, revolted at the sight of force, and all rushed to arms. The Spaniards as a whole conducted themselves like men of honor. I have nothing to say of that, except that they triumphed, that they have been cruelly punished, that perhaps they have regrets! They deserved a better fate!" [3]

At Bayonne, Napoleon was at the parting of the ways: this was the beginning of a new epoch in his life. Up to this time, he had had only kings as his adversaries, and his career had been a succession of triumphs. Now was to begin the

[1] De Clercq, 246.

[2] A few months later, Charles, who suffered from the cold at Compiègne, requested the privilege of going to the South of France. After the sojourn at Bayonne, Napoleon never saw any of these princes again.

[3] *Mémorial.*

struggle of the peoples, before which the power of his genius was to succomb.

While the Spainsh grandees at Bayonne were accepting the new régime, the people everywhere rose in revolt, to overturn the throne set up without their consent. The insurrection was general and instantaneous: there was no plot and no accord, but all were animated by the same feeling. The provincial juntas accepted the supremacy of Seville, the richest city in Spain, and next to Madrid the most populous. The first act of this assembly was a declaration of war against Napoleon.

To meet the Spanish regular army of 150,000 troops, the Emperor had only 70,000 men in Spain. Under ordinary circumstances this would have been enough, but this war resembled no other. In Italy, in Austria, and in Prussia, Napoleon had defeated the armies, and the nations had submitted, but in Spain, the armies constituted the smallest part of the national force. The soil was covered with combatants: it was a guerrilla warfare of the worst description ever known to history.

On the 14 July, Bessières, with a little force of twelve thousand men, defeated nearly thirty thousand Spaniards near Valladolid. After this the revolt suddenly died down in the northern provinces: the communications were assured both with France and Portugal, and the road to Madrid was opened. On the 20 July, Joseph entered his new capital, where he was received with no signs of welcome.

Contrary to all his principles and his customary practices, Napoleon was forced to divide his army in order to act against the insurgent provinces. This shortly led to a terrible disaster, the first stain upon the Imperial arms. Dupont, who had penetrated into Andalusia, was surrounded, and capitulated at Baylen on the 22 July.

Napoleon was at Bordeaux, on his way back to Paris, when this news reached him on the first of August. His grief was only equalled by his indignation. The material loss was nothing in comparison with the moral effects of this disaster,

which were terrible and irreparable. Up to that day, the Spaniards had dreaded the French troops, and the victory of Bessières had doubled their fears: a triumph in the South would have led to the complete submission of the Peninsula. The veterans of Austerlitz, Jena, and Friedland, had laid down their arms before the raw levies of Spain, and the Spaniards now felt that they were invincible.

The last of July, two English armies, of thirty thousand men in all, under Wellesley and Moore, landed in Portugal. In spite of his great inferiority in numbers, Junot attacked the British, but was defeated, and forced to retire to Lisbon. Nevertheless, he showed so much resolution that he succeeded in securing very honorable terms from the victors. By the convention of Cintra, signed the 30 August, the French army evacuated Portugal with all its arms and baggage, and was transported to France, without any restrictions.

After the disaster of Baylen, Joseph was forced to abandon his capital, and retire beyond the Ebro. His kingdom was reduced to the territory occupied by the French troops.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### 1808

### SPAIN AND AUSTRIA

Napoleon Reassures the Czar — He Offers Finland — Russian Victories — The Province Annexed — Bernadotte Fails to Coöperate — England Sends Troops — Reaction in Russia — Napoleon Explains His Spanish Policy — The Czar's Approval — He Accepts an Interview "Without Conditions" — Disturbing News from Austria — Napoleon's Apprehensions — He Demands the Czar's Assistance — The Baylen Disaster a Terrible Blow to Napoleon's Prestige — All His Plans Upset — He Announces the Evacuation of Prussia — Alexander's Joy Succeeded by New Doubts — His Advice to Austria — Conditions of the Evacuation of Prussia — Alexander's Final Letter before the Meeting

DURING all these months, although Napoleon had given the priority to the arrangement of affairs in Spain, he had by no means lost sight of the negotiations with Russia. About the middle of February he demanded of Champagny a work at once political and geographical upon the partition of Turkey and the means of effectuating it. With this report before him, the Emperor studied the conditions of conquest and dismemberment, so as to be in a position to discuss them with Alexander when they met. In the meantime he took great pains to restrain the impatience of the Czar over the delay which he felt was necessary. Up to the present time his promises of the evacuation of Prussia had all been conditioned upon the withdrawal of Russia from the Principalities. Now his language became more positive: he spoke of giving up Berlin to Frederick-William, protested to Tolstoi that he had no idea of reëstablishing Poland, and assured him that he would evacuate the Grand Duchy as soon as the season permitted him to move his troops.

To Alexander, he outlines even more satisfactory propositions. Through Caulaincourt he reiterates his willingness to see Finland annexed to Russia and offers his coöperation.

He announces that the corps of Bernadotte has already received marching orders, and will invade the Scandanavian Peninsula from the South, while the Czar attacks from the North, thus placing Stockholm between two fires.

The first operations in Finland were a brilliant success. The Russian troops overran the country in a few weeks, and on the 10 May received the capitulation of the capital. The letters of the Czar at this time contained only the bulletins of his victories. With perfect tact, he refrained from speaking of Turkey, and avoided any allusions to Prussia. Even before the entire occupation of Finland was an established fact, he announced the reunion of that province to his Empire, in the manner of Rome and of Napoleon. This event made a great sensation at Saint Petersburg. It was the first manifest sign of the value of the French alliance, and was regarded by Alexander as a personal triumph, the final justification of his policy.

This movement toward better feelings between the two nations, however, was quickly suspended. Alexander and his minister had understood, and announced on all sides, that the French contingent of twenty thousand men, supported by ten thousand Danes, was promptly to pass The Sound and coöperate with the Russian army in Finland. But Napoleon, who was not directly interested in this campaign, had given his marshal no positive orders, and Bernadotte hesitated to invade Sweden. Denmark displayed but little zeal in the cause, and the appearance of several British frigates in The Sound gave additional reason for postponing the passage. Bernadotte accordingly suspended his march, and remained in Holstein.

This halt, which was soon known at Saint Petersburg, produced a most unfavorable impression, and symptoms of coldness were at once apparent. On top of this came the news of Napoleon's departure for Bayonne, and Alexander felt himself tricked and deceived. As for Russian society, the recoil was absolute: it returned to its former position of hostility.

To make matters even worse, the military situation in the North became suddenly critical. Recovered from their first demoralization, the Swedes took the offensive and were victorious in several engagements. At the same time England came to the assistance of her ally, sending Moore with ten thousand soldiers withdrawn from Sicily. It was feared at Saint Petersburg that a combined attack of the allies might put even the capital in danger.

Meanwhile, Russia began to feel the effects of the interruption of commerce with England: the paper money was terribly depreciated, and there were failures everywhere. Caulaincourt had a hard task to explain matters to the Czar and combat his doubts as to the value of the alliance. The ambassador was forced to employ many hours in calming and reassuring him, a task like that of Penelope, where every day saw undone the labor of the day before.

At the same time, the enemies of France redoubled their attacks. Prince Czartoryski, before leaving for Vienna, sent the Czar a memorandum, found among Alexander's papers after his death, in which he depicted the future in the darkest colors. Pozzo also had turned up again, and sent Alexander a treatise in which he pointed out the dangers of the partition, and maintained that in undertaking this operation, under the direction of Napoleon, the Czar would be the cat's paw of an unscrupulous ambition.

The task of Caulaincourt became even more arduous as affairs in Spain approached a crisis. At this decisive moment the Emperor felt more than ever the necessity of guarding contact with Alexander. In brief notes, either to the Czar direct, or to his ambassador, he explains his motives and justifies his conduct. We do not possess the original text of these letters, but they are substantially reproduced in the despatches of Caulaincourt, where he gives the reports of his interviews with the Czar.[1] In a letter to Alexander, under date of the 29 April, Napoleon says: "This family quarrel,

[1] Copies of these letters (from 2 February 1808 to 10 April 1809) are published in 3 Vandal, *Appendice*, 549–587.

and the symptoms of revolution in Spain, give me some embarrassment, but I shall soon be free to concert the great affair with Your Majesty."

In later letters the Emperor shows himself led on by circumstances beyond his control: the crown of Spain was on the ground, he was forced to pick it up and dispose of it. "The most pressing thing," he said, "was to save the country and the colonies. Your Majesty will admit that there was no other possible course. As for the return of the Emperor, this unexpected dénouement may retard it a little." Finally, when Joseph is proclaimed, he writes quite a long letter to Alexander in which he explains his course: his letter is less an apology than a pleading. Later, in speaking of the same events, but addressing posterity, he was to admit at Saint Helena that the Spanish enterprise was the greatest fault of his reign.

During the negotiations at Bayonne Alexander preserved a tactful silence. When the outcome was known, he had only words of approbation, and even of flattery for the Emperor: "I thought," he said, "that he had filled all the pages of history, but there remained for him the fine one of Spain." [1]

At the same time, in his talks with Caulaincourt, the Czar showed plainly that he expected to be rewarded for "his discretion during all the period of these events." In justice to Napoleon it must be said that it never entered his mind to avoid the reckoning: he only wished to put it off. Therefore, as soon as he thought that matters in Spain were going well, he gave a part of his attention to the Orient. But, the more he studied the situation, the more he became convinced that it could only be settled by himself at a personal meeting with Alexander. The 31 May he writes Caulaincourt to take the matter up again with the Czar, and arrange "an interview without conditions." This proposition was immediately accepted by Alexander.

A month later, at the end of June, Napoleon realized for the first time that Spain would be a serious obstacle to carry-

[1] Report of Caulaincourt, 27 April 1808.

ing out his plans for the partition. He then perceived that the suppression of the revolt would require a regular campaign, with a large army, and that he could not spare the troops for the conquest of Turkey. He did not as yet countermand the preparations already begun, but wrote his ministers to go slowly.

The news from Vienna was also disturbing. Austria, since the Peace of Presburg, had reformed her military establishment on the French model, and seemed disposed to make another effort to regain her lost provinces. The events in Spain hastened her preparations: the fall of the Bourbons seemed to indicate a determination by Napoleon to overthrow all the legitimate dynasties, and the turn of the Habsburgs might come next.

Napoleon heard of the preparations of Austria with great regret: a new war with that nation was far from his thoughts. But from that moment he was forced to face the possibility of another campaign on the Danube coincident with the operations in the Peninsula. The outlook was most discouraging: how could he meet this new situation and at the same time keep his promises to Alexander?

In the endless struggle with England it seemed as though some new complication always arose at the last moment to thwart his well-laid plans. In 1805, in his camp at Boulogne, on the eve of crossing the Channel, the evidences of the formation of a new coalition had forced him to turn his back on the ocean and issue orders for the Grand Army to march on the Rhine. In 1807, after conquering all Europe to the Niemen, he had made plans, in conjunction with his new ally, to strike his old adversary, if not in the heart, at least in her vital parts. "Obliged to give up his prey, he would perhaps be forced to recommence his campaigns in Italy and Germany, those struggles which he no longer desired, in which he had won sufficient glory; to take up once more this career of dazzling, but sterile, conquests, which terminated nothing, and caused him, at the goal of victory, always to find another war."[1]

[1] 1 Vandal, 359.

Before it was too late, he resolved, if possible, to bring Austria to reason, and put a stop to her preparations for a supreme adventure. It would be easy to demonstrate that, instead of being stronger, she was really weaker than three years before. To be sure, she had a larger and better equipped army, but since the last peace her frontiers were everywhere open to attack. More than that, and this was the most essential point, in 1805 Russia was her ally — now the troops of the Czar marched with France, and would attack Austria in the rear. It was therefore of the greatest importance to have Alexander make his position clear, and assume at least a preventitive rôle. It was evident that the Court of Vienna, badly informed of the stipulations of Tilsit, and misled by the friendly attitude of the Czar, counted upon the neutrality of Russia in case of another war with France. If Alexander informed Francis that he was bound to come to the assistance of his ally, if attacked, Austria would hesitate to begin hostilities.

The last of June, and again ten days later, Napoleon wrote Caulaincourt to sound Alexander, and prevail upon him, if possible, to take a firm stand with Austria. But, before the receipt of these letters, Alexander had already spoken to Austria, and in terms which left nothing to be desired. Faithful to the line of policy which he had adopted, he did not intend, before their interview, to give Napoleon any grievance against him. As further evidence of his moral support, Alexander hastened to recognize Joseph as King of Spain, thereby ratifying in the face of Europe the dethronement of the Bourbons.

On the 17 July, when Napoleon heard of the glorious victory of Bessières at Medina de Rio-Seco, he cried: "No battle was ever gained under more important circumstances: it decides the fate of Spain." [1] But he was too hasty in making this affirmation. The next news which he received, two weeks later, was the capitulation of Dupont at Baylen. We have already spoken of the indignation and grief of the Emperor on

[1] *Corresp.*, 14210.

this occasion. Placing his hand upon his uniform, he said: "I have a stain there." His honor as a soldier, his pride as a Frenchman, were alike wounded; and his position as chief of the Empire was at the same time endangered. In the loss of the three divisions of Dupont, and the forced abandonment of Madrid, he saw not only the blow to his reputation for invincibility, and to the prestige which was a part of his force, but also the ruin of all his plans for cementing the Russian alliance. The vision of conquering a peace from England faded away, and he faced the possibility of a general revolt of the Continent against his domination, which would shake the very foundations of the Imperial edifice.

The disaster of Baylen changed all his plans and upset all his combinations. To reconquer the Peninsula, he would be forced to recall a large part of his forces from beyond the Elbe, to release his grip on Prussia, to face a probable attack from Austria while he was involved in Spain, and the possible defection of Russia, when the Czar found that he was no longer able to fulfill his promises for the partition of Turkey. At one stroke, he had lost the power of containing his enemies, and of assuring the fidelity of his ally.

Compelled to change his plans, as on the field of battle, Napoleon did so instantly, without the slightest hesitation. He decided to order three army corps from the Oder to the Ebro; to evacuate all of Prussia, and restore the King to his dominions. His decision was announced to the Czar before it was made known at Königsberg. Making a merit of necessity, he represented to Alexander that this step was taken in deference to his wishes. On his way back to Paris, from Bordeaux, where he received the news from Spain, Napoleon sent a courier to Caulaincourt with instructions to announce to the Czar his intentions regarding Prussia. If necessary, the ambassador was authorized to state that the French troops would evacuate Warsaw, and retire to the left bank of the Elbe, making that river the limit of his power.

It was not until the 20 August, five days after his return to

Saint-Cloud, that Napoleon made known his wishes to Austria, and at the same time called on the Czar to support him. He demanded of the Emperor Francis the recognition of Joseph as King of Spain, and of Murat as King of Naples. Caulaincourt was instructed to use two arguments with the Czar: First, unless the Emperor was assured at once of the pacific intentions of Austria, he would attack and crush that Power before turning his attention to Spain; Second, he would not withdraw his forces from Silesia so long as the armies of the archdukes menaced him in Bohemia, Moravia, and upon the Danube.

The first message of the Emperor was received by Alexander with joy, and he told Caulaincourt how much he was pleased and touched by this proof of Napoleon's attachment. But the reports, grossly exaggerated, of the Spanish disaster soon became known, and the Czar was too shrewd not to see the connection between Napoleon's unexpected generosity and the change in his situation. Alexander, however, had too much tact, or rather dissimulation, to show openly his real feelings. He returned always to his favorite expression: "It was under difficult circumstances that the Emperor could rely upon him." [1]

To this assurance, Caulaincourt replied that His Majesty would never have a better opportunity of rendering efficient service to his ally than in taking now a firm stand with regard to Austria. The ambassador repeated this statement on several occasions, but only obtained evasive replies. The Czar certainly had no desire to see another war between France and Austria, which might result in the disappearance of the Habsburg monarchy, and leave him in contact with the "great domination." His sincere wish was to see the Court of Vienna warned and restrained, but until his doubts regarding the intentions of the Emperor were settled at Erfurt, he desired to avoid any rift in his friendly relations with the Emperor Francis. If his alliance with France were broken, he must necessarily turn to his old associate in order to preserve the

[1] Report of Caulaincourt, 26 August 1808.

balance of power in Europe. In stating that he was menaced by Austria, was not Napoleon really seeking a pretext to attack and ruin that Empire? Would not his own downfall follow the disappearance of that buckler State? "The destruction of Austria," wrote Tolstoi, "must be envisaged as the advance-courier and the means of our own." Moved by these gloomy words, and assailed by doubts, Alexander resorted to half-measures: he endeavored to serve the interests of France without compromising his own. While assuring Caulaincourt that he "spoke to Austria in a firm tone," in a letter to his ambassador at Vienna he said: "The armament is finished: it has attracted attention. It only remains to wish that the Cabinet of Vienna, acting upon the principles of its own wisdom, shall put aside and minimize all that this measure may cause of antagonism, and that it shall direct its solicitude toward conserving the peace of which it has garnered the fruits. Make it known that this is my ardent desire. *Cannot the Peace of Tilsit, which I contracted, have its engagements?*" [1]

Later, on the 5 September, Alexander speaks more clearly. He writes Kourakine: [2] "The affairs of Spain going badly, is it not permitted to suppose that Napoleon will be charmed to adjourn them for a time, to fall upon Austria with all his forces, and wipe out one of the two remaining Powers which can cause him trouble in Europe? The wisest policy for Austria, it thus seems to me, is to remain a tranquil spectator of the struggle which Napoleon must maintain in Spain. There will always be time to follow later the policy which circumstances then suggest. In taking this course, Austria will spare me the painful necessity of taking fact and cause against her, for I am not bound except in case she attacks." This advice was sound, and Austria was wise enough to follow it, but the words were hardly those of a sincere friend and ally of France.

The doubts and uncertainty of Alexander were again in-

[1] Hassel, 536.
[2] Quoted by Hassel, 536–537.

creased, when he received the text of the convention imposed by Napoleon for the evacuation of Prussia. This act, which was signed at Paris on the 8 September, indeed stipulated the liberation of Prussian territory, and returned the capital to Frederick-William, but it did not assure his independence. Napoleon limited the Prussian army to forty-two thousand men, and retained, among other guarantees for the payment of the war indemnity, the three fortresses on the Oder: Stettin, Glogau and Kustrin. In keeping this strategic line, was not the Emperor, while containing Prussia, also reserving a base for operations against Russia? Far from evacuating Warsaw, also, the corps of Davout was concentrated in the Grand Duchy.

In a conversation with Caulaincourt, Alexander expressed his views very frankly: "Make them still pay all that they can, but do not impose upon them humiliating conditions. The Emperor has too much glory to have need of wounding any one. These people, I swear it, will be his friends, if he so desires . . . I wish to make friends for the Emperor. Recall the device which you have placed upon his bust [in one of the salons of the embassy]: *Great in war, great in peace, great in alliances.*" [1]

In a final letter to Napoleon, under date of the 25 August, Alexander promised to meet him at Erfurt on the 28 September. With great tact, he touches lightly on all the subjects to be discussed and settled at their meeting: the four questions, of Spain, Austria, Prussia, and Turkey. The solution of the first two was of vital importance to France: the other two were essential to the security and greatness of Russia. Owing to this balancing of interests there could be between the two sovereigns absolute reciprocity of services and concessions. The Czar gave the Emperor free-hand in Spain, and in the case of Austria offered a support more apparent than real. In return he demanded the complete reconstruction of Prussia, so necessary to his security; and the satisfaction of his covetousness in the Orient.

[1] Report of Caulaincourt, 23 September 1808.

## CHAPTER NINE

## 1808

## THE ERFURT MEETING

Napoleon Receives the Ambassadors — He Calls Metternich to Account — The Reply of Austria — The Emperor Reviews His Troops — He Consults with His Ministers — Attitude of Talleyrand — He Confers with Metternich — Alexander Starts for Erfurt — His Visit to the Royal Family of Prussia — The City of Erfurt — Preparations for the Meeting — Napoleon's Arrival — His Meeting with Alexander — Appearance of the Emperors — Program of the Meeting — Arrival of the Austrian Envoy — His Reception by the Emperor — The Rôle of Talleyrand — His Motives — His Declaration to the Czar — The Impression on Alexander — Napoleon perceives the Change in the Czar — He Realizes the Danger of His Position

THE night of his return to Paris, the 14 August, Napoleon sent for the members of the diplomatic corps, to meet him the following afternoon at Saint-Cloud. The next day, which was his *jour de fête*, the minsters accordingly were gathered in one of the salons of the château. These audiences were always dreaded by the diplomats, as the Emperor frequently took advantage of them to launch what Metternich called "his oral manifestoes."

When the ministers were assembled on this occasion, Metternich, the Austrian ambassador, was in the front rank; next to him was Tolstoi, and then the other ministers in order of precedence. The Emperor appeared, with his ministers, and as usual quickly reviewed the diplomatic corps, addressing a few polite words to each one. Then he placed himself before Metternich and proceeded to call him to account, but in a perfectly calm and courteous manner, for the Austrian armament. The comte, employing all the resources of his active mind, defended himself with great dexterity. He said that, in reorganizing her military forces, Austria menaced no one,

which, in principle, was quite true. But Napoleon, who well knew his trade, cited specific instances of movements of troops, the purchase of horses and supplies, the appeals to public sentiment, and other acts, which all seemed to presage an intention to begin hostilities at an early date. The Emperor's entire discourse, which lasted over an hour, was in a tone of warning, rather than of menace, and was interpreted by all as a sincere effort to preserve the peace.[1]

The official reply of Austria came ten days later, and was communicated to the Emperor by Metternich in a private audience at Saint-Cloud. He brought the assurance from his Government that Austria would withdraw the troops massed near the Silesian frontier, and would send home the reserves, "who had been called out only for exercise and instruction." On the subject of the recognition of King Joseph, the reply was evasive, but hopeful.

During the months of August and September, the columns of the Grand Army were continuously passing through Paris, on their way from Germany to the Peninsula. Many of these troops had not been in France since they left the Channel for the campaign of Austerlitz three years before. The Emperor wished that their progress should be one grand triumphal march: that they should be greeted everywhere with banquets and ovations. He himself received them, and passed them in review in the court of the Tuileries. He addressed them, and called on them for further deeds of valor: "A true Frenchman cannot, must not rest until the seas are open and free.[2]

On the 3 September, the Senate, convened in special session, voted a call for a new conscription of 160,000 men. The Emperor intended to enter Spain at the head of an army of 200,000 troops, and he proposed at the same time to maintain his strength in Germany.

Learning, two days later, that the Czar was setting out for Erfurt on the 12 September, Napoleon ordered Lannes to

[1] See 2 Metternich, 194–199. [2] *Corresp.*, 14388.

proceed to the limit of the territory occupied by the French troops, on the Vistula, to meet and escort his ally. He then began a close study of the questions to be discussed at the meeting, calling into consultation Talleyrand and his principal ministers.

At this time, Talleyrand had definitely adopted the course which he was to follow until the fall of the Empire. He had always secretly detested Napoleon, and he had now decided to betray him. With the perspicacity of a trained observer, he had reached the conclusion that the Emperor could not sustain for many years more his struggle against all Europe, and that his latest enterprise had still further compromised his situation.[1]

Although the attitude of his former minister had not entirely escaped the eye of the Emperor, he resolved nevertheless to take this traitor to Erfurt as his principal adviser! It was one of the greatest mistakes of his career.

In order to make Talleyrand fully acquainted with the mysteries of the Russian alliance Napoleon now authorized him to withdraw from the secret archives of the Foreign Office the letters and despatches of Caulaincourt, the note of Roumiantsof regarding the partition of Turkey, the memoranda of Champagny, and the various statistical and geographical studies. Napoleon thus supplied his worst enemy with the ammunition which he was to employ with deadly effect at Erfurt.

Learning from these papers of the designs of Alexander, and fearful of the general *bouleversement* which would result in Europe from any attempt to carry out the plan, Talleyrand resolved to bring external pressure to bear to defeat the arrangement. He therefore took Metternich into his confidence, and suggested that the Emperor Francis should arrange to be present at Erfurt. Metternich adopted this idea, and at once communicated it to his master. Then, as the time was too short for him to receive instructions from Vienna, he requested, on his own responsibility, the privilege of

[1] *Cf.* 1 Vandal, 401–402.

accompanying the Emperor to Erfurt. This demand was promptly, but very politely, refused.[1]

On the 23 September, Napoleon left Saint-Cloud for Erfurt; he had been preceded by Talleyrand and Champagny.

In leaving Saint Petersburg, Alexander had to endure the remonstrances and the direful predictions of his Court and his family. He was told that he was walking into a snare, that he would be interned in France, like the Spanish Bourbons, that Erfurt was to be a repetition of Bayonne![2]

The Czar travelled post-haste, in a simple calèche, without any escort. His only companions were the grand marshal, Tolstoi, one aide de camp, and his surgeon. He had been preceded by his brother, Constantine, his staff, and his minister, Roumiantsof, who was to bear the brunt of the discussions at Erfurt. Alexander had invited Caulaincourt to be present at the interview, and Napoleon had thought it advisable for him to accept.

En route, Alexander stopped for two days at Königsberg, to pay his respects to the royal family of Prussia, who were still residing in this sad capital. He promised to plead warmly the cause of his former ally at the meeting, but he did not inspire much confidence: "he was charming, but so weak."

As soon as he crossed the Vistula, Alexander was met by Lannes. As he neared the end of his journey, the Czar travelled faster: avoiding Berlin, and passing through Leipzig, he stopped at Weimar to remove the dust of his journey before meeting the Emperor.

Situated halfway between the Rhine and the Elbe, the ancient Hanseatic city of Erfurt, whose origin was obscure, had owed to commerce its importance and its wealth. Later, with the loss of its liberty, its prosperity had diminished. After Jena, it remained in the hands of Napoleon, as one of the spoils of war, and was still ignorant of its final fate, when the celebrated meeting was arranged to take place within its walls. A quiet commercial city, it was ill-adapted for the holding of

[1] See 2 Metternich, 223. [2] See letter of Caulaincourt, 5 November 1808.

a great European congress. The streets were winding, badly paved, unlighted at night, and the open places irregular: it seemed hardly fitted for the display of processions and the evolutions of troops. The narrow houses, with their pointed gables and picturesque façades, although well-adapted to the quiet life of the rich burgesses, did not lend themselves easily to the luxury of a Court.

All Europe had its eyes fixed on this little Prussian city, where was to be decided the fate of peoples and of kings. Strangers rushed from all parts of the Continent; the officers of the Imperial household came to prepare the lodgings; for Napoleon, considering himself the host, dictated the invitations and did the honors. The warehouses of the Crown supplied the necessary articles to furnish the palaces: the beds, the tapestries of Gobelins, the bronzes, the chandeliers, and the table service, were all forwarded from Paris. The theatre was repaired and redecorated: the artists of the Théâtre-Français were brought from Paris to present the chefs-d'œuvre of their répertoire. The portraits of the old German princes gave place to the emblems of the Empire: the Imperial eagles, and the hangings sewn with golden bees were everywhere in evidence. Certain bourgeois residences, selected to lodge the guests of the Emperor, were sumptuously decorated, and assumed the air of palaces.

The German Courts had been much excited over the first rumors of the meeting. The kings of Bavaria, Saxony and Würtemberg, the princes of the Confederation of the Rhine, all desired to be present and render their homage to the Emperor. Hesitating between the wish to pay their court, and the fear of embarrassing their chief, they wrote Napoleon, and humbly expressed their feelings. The Grand Duke of Baden, prevented from travelling by his age, presented "the homage of a profound veneration." Such were the relations which then existed between the Emperor and his great German vassals.

Napoleon arrived in his travelling coach, on the morning of the 27 September, accompanied only by Berthier. Arcs of triumph had been prepared, and an official reception, but he coun-

termanded all, as he wished the honors to be rendered to the two emperors jointly. He took up his lodging in the palace, gave several orders, visited the King of Saxony, and then mounted his horse to go with all his staff to meet the Czar. At the same hour, Alexander had left Weimar in a calèche with his brother and Marshal Lannes. The two emperors met about five miles from Erfurt. For many years afterwards, a pear tree beside the road was pointed out as the point where the two monarchs met, and embraced each other with effusion. Napoleon wore the Russian order of Saint Andrew, Alexander, the grand-cordon of the Légion d'honneur. By order of the Emperor, a horse had been brought for the Czar, like the ones he usually mounted, with a Russian saddle and bridle, and a *housse* of white fur. After a short chat, they mounted, and rode toward the city. The cortège presented a magnificent sight. Five thousand grenadiers of the Old Guard led the way, under the command of General Oudinot, followed by the brilliant staffs of the emperors. More troops were massed at the gates of the city, in parade uniform. The artillery thundered in repeated salvos, the old pieces on the ramparts responded, and in the intervals between the discharges there could be heard the sound of the bells in all the belfries of the town. From the natural tribunes of the heights around the city, an enormous crowd of interested spectators surveyed the brilliant scene. In front of the two staffs rode the emperors: at the right was Alexander, handling his horse gracefully, an imposing figure in the dark green uniform of a general officer of the Russian army, his tall and slight figure surpassing that of his ally. Nevertheless, Napoleon, dressed as usual in his simple uniform of the chasseurs of his Guard, with his short, stout figure, and his indifferent horsemanship, attracted and fascinated the eyes of all observers: "beside him, all grandeur, all magnificence, remained in the shade, for his immortal deeds surrounded him with their *éclat*, pointed him out to the people, and formed for him a magic cortège." [1]

They entered the city in state, the drums beating the

[1] 4 Thibaudeau, 56–59.

charge, and the standards saluting as they passed, while the cries of "Vivent les Empereurs!" rent the air. During the day Napoleon and Alexander appeared several times with their escorts, and the curiosity of the public was fully satisfied.

Next to the Emperor, the people were interested in his celebrated companions-in-arms, those modern paladins, children of the people, but vanquishers of kings, who bore the titles of famous victories: Lannes, Duc de Montebello, Berthier, Prince de Neuchâtel; Caulaincourt, Duc de Vicence, and the favorite aide de camp of the Emperor, Duroc, Duc de Friuli.

The ministers, in their carriages, were more difficult to pick out: one heard most frequently the names of Talleyrand, Champagny and Roumiantsof.

In the evening, the city was illuminated, and the troops and the people mingled freely, without a sign of trouble.

The following day, the monarchs agreed upon their program: the morning was to be set aside for their personal affairs; the afternoon was reserved for political discussions and formal receptions; the evening was devoted to society and amusement. This same day there occurred an unexpected incident: the arrival of Baron de Vincent, as envoy extraordinary of the Emperor of Austria. He bore a letter from Francis to Napoleon, and another to Alexander, both of them friendly but vague. Following in part the advice of Talleyrand, the Emperor Francis had apparently wished to recall himself to their attention, and to participate, even if indirectly, in their meeting. Napoleon gave an immediate audience to the envoy.

A painting, hung in the museum at Versailles, has preserved for posterity this memorable scene. Here we find grouped in an ideal setting the principal personages at Erfurt. Napoleon is standing beside a massive table in his cabinet, where the reception took place. His hand is extended to receive the letter presented by M. de Vincent, whose body is bent in a profound salute. A few steps away, Alexander contemplates the scene with an air of satisfaction: his pose displays admirably his fine profile and his noble figure. In the

CZAR ALEXANDER

background, between the two monarchs, behind the table, we see the handsome, but cynical face of Talleyrand: his powdered hair, and his sombre costume relieved by light blue embroideries, recall the days of the Ancien Régime. In the rear of the room can be distinguished the kings and princes and ministers: we recognize in the throng the faces of Duroc, Berthier, Maret, Caulaincourt, Roumiantsof, and finally the Grand Duke Constantine, with his Tartar visage. The faces, even the costumes, are reproduced with fidelity: each figure is a portrait.

All these personages are grouped around the Emperor, who occupies the centre of the scene, and fixes the eye of the observer. But the one who is to play the leading rôle at Erfurt is Prince de Talleyrand, who seems to desire to efface himself in the background. His chance has come at last to thwart the plans of his master, and serve his own secret interests: "At Erfurt he will inaugurate with Alexander the relations which will permit him, six years later, to do the honors of a conquered Paris to the Russian monarch." [1]

Nevertheless, it is only just to admit that some of Talleyrand's motives were not entirely selfish, but were inspired by a true patriotism. With real apprehension for the future of France, he had seen Napoleon extend his power beyond the limits of reason, and involve himself in dangerous and impossible enterprises. He thought that the time had come to moderate and control the ambition of the Emperor, and he flattered himself that in so doing he was best serving the interests both of Napoleon and of France.

As soon as Alexander arrived, Talleyrand secured a private audience, at which he expressed his convictions with an audacious frankness. "Sire," he said, "what do you come here for? You must save Europe, and you can do so only by curbing Napoleon. The French people are civilized, their sovereign is not. The sovereign of Russia is civilized, and his people are not: the sovereign of Russia must therefore be the ally of the French people." [2]

[1] 1 Vandal, 420.

[2] 2 Metternich, 248.

In other interviews, he again took up and developed the same thought. He pictured France as weary of war, desirous of repose, and looking to the Czar to mediate between her and the genius who was continually calling upon her for new sacrifices. He won over to his point of view the Russian ambassador, Tolstoi, and made a profound impression on Roumiantsof, the most trusted adviser of Alexander. Even the marshals of Napoleon, at this time, had become tired of war, and wished to enjoy in peace their honors and their wealth: Talleyrand succeeded in having their complaints reach the ears of the Czar.

Alexander was much impressed by these words, which came to him from so many different sources, and which seemed a confirmation of the doubts which had troubled him for many months. As he wrote his minister later, since "the best informed and the ablest men of France themselves" suspect and disapprove the Imperial policy, should he aid a boundless ambition which knows no obstacles? The advantages which he had sought in the French alliance might come to him through the embarrassment of his ally, rather than by his coöperation. What he now hopes for is that the Emperor, deeply involved in Spain, held in check by Austria, may give him a free hand on the Danube.

Napoleon was not slow to realize the change in the attitude of Alexander, whom he found "different from what he was at Tilsit," and he demanded of Caulaincourt the reason for this change. The ambassador courageously replied that every one thought himself menaced by Napoleon's ambition, and that Russia began to share the general apprehensions. The Emperor said, with a smile: "Then they think me ambitious? But France is great enough: what can I desire? . . . It is doubtless this affair of Spain." Then, evidently feeling the weakness of his case, he went over in detail the events at Bayonne, and endeavored to justify his course, claiming that he could have taken none other, in the interests of France and of his politics.[1]

[1] Papers of Caulaincourt, quoted 1 Vandal, 424.

Nevertheless, he was forced to admit that the events in Spain, in showing him insatiable, and in proving that he was no longer invincible, had raised the hopes of his enemies. Habituated to victory, he hopes once more to triumph over all obstacles, but he cannot escape the conclusion that the struggle will be difficult, and that it will require all his courage and all his resources to overcome his foes.

## CHAPTER TEN

### 1808

## POLITICS AND DIVORCE

The Eastern Question Postponed — Alexander Satisfied with the Principalities — A Joint Note to England — Attitude of Austria — Alexander's Position — His Suspicions of Napoleon — The Emperor's Change of Front — The Visit to Weimar — The Field of Jena — Return to Erfurt — Life of the Emperors — The Rumors of Divorce — Napoleon's Hesitation — The Bonapartes and Beauharnais — Fouché's Activities — Russia Interested in the Reports — The Grand Duchess Catherine — The Czar's Embarrassment — His Mother's Dislike of Napoleon — Efforts to Obtain News from Paris — Tolstoi's Reports — The Divorce Brought up at Erfurt — Napoleon Sounds the Czar, Who Expresses His Good Wishes — No Formal Demand Made — Catherine Marries Oldenburg — End of the Conference — Its Results

THE partition of Turkey, which for many months had been the principal object of the meeting arranged by the emperors, was hardly considered at Erfurt. The situation in the Peninsula, and the attitude of Austria, had led Napoleon to modify his views: he wished now to postpone indefinitely the Eastern question, and to offer Russia only the Principalities. Much to his surprise, he did not find Alexander disposed to object. The plan, in the first instance, had been the conception of Napoleon, rather than of the Czar, whose ambition, at least for the moment, was to acquire Moldavia and Wallachia, and extend the Russian frontiers to the Danube. Roumiantsof had also come around to this idea; he said later in a letter to his master that the acquisition of these two provinces, "alone and without coöperation, is much more advantageous to us."[1] It was therefore tacitly agreed that the question of partition should be held in abeyance, for another interview, and that only the question of the Principalities should be considered.

[1] Letter 27 December 1808.

The idea of bringing England to terms, by a menace to her Indian Empire, being thus abandoned, what substitute could be found? It was decided to write a joint note to the King of Great Britain, offering to negotiate; inviting him to give peace to the world; and, in discreet terms, letting him see that a refusal would lead to new and greater changes in the European situation. But Napoleon felt that this move would have little effect unless strong pressure were brought to bear at the same time upon Austria to secure her adhesion to the Continental System, thus depriving England of the hope of forming another coalition and renewing the war.

The advices from Vienna continued to be more and more disquieting. The French ambassador wrote that Austria had refused to recognize the new kings, Joseph and Murat, until they had "arrived in their capitals and given notice of that event." In spite of its formal promises, the Government continued to press its military preparations, and did nothing to quiet public sentiment. These reports had a profound effect upon Napoleon. He said: "I understand now why the Emperor has not come: it is difficult for a sovereign to lie to your face; he has put this task on M. de Vincent." [1] Confronted by the supreme necessity of securing the active coöperation of Russia, in order to hold Austria in check, all other considerations seemed secondary, and the Emperor became reconciled to the gift of the Principalities. But Napoleon, in his conferences with Alexander, strongly insisted upon the necessity of taking a high tone with Austria, while negotiating with England. He also had drawn up a formal note to the Czar, in which he set forth in detail the steps necessary to check Austria, and pointed out that the adhesion of that Government would determine the submission of Great Britain.

Alexander declared himself ready to make common cause with France if Austria broke the peace; but in terms which were clear and firm, although courteous and friendly, he gave the Emperor to understand that he would go no further. In vain Napoleon argued and pleaded, Alexander would not

[1] Papers of Caulaincourt, quoted by Vandal.

recede from his position: he would never attempt to coerce a friendly State in the exercise of its sovereign rights. The Czar, who had the reputation of being feeble, uncertain and irresolute, displayed an amazing firmness. "Your Emperor is as head-strong as a mule," Napoleon said to Caulaincourt. "When he does not wish to hear, he pretends to be deaf." Then, alluding to the unfortunate enterprise which was causing him so much embarrassment, he exclaimed: "These cursed affairs in Spain are costing me dear!"

In taking this stand, Alexander certainly did not wish to encourage Francis to make war, a result which he dreaded fully as much as Napoleon. He thought that Austria was arming through fear, and would never begin hostilities unless provoked beyond endurance. In this opinion he was entirely wrong, while Napoleon was absolutely right. Alexander, and his self-appointed adviser, Talleyrand, misunderstood both the intentions of Napoleon, and the real positon of Austria. Even admitting that the first idea of Austria had been purely defensive, by the very force of circumstances it must gradually change its character, and become offensive. That nation, with its feeble resources, could not long maintain such an expensive military establishment, and must either disarm or fight.[1] Between the two horns of this dilemma, it would certainly choose the second. One fear only could cause Austria to hesitate and draw back, and that was the prospect of fighting Napoleon in front, while Russia descended upon her rear. The action upon which the Emperor insisted so strongly was the only one which could have preserved the peace. But Napoleon, at Erfurt, was reaping what he had sown. Alexander could not read his heart, and could only judge by his actions: the past led one to suspect the future. Unfounded, in reality, Alexander's suspicions were fully justified by appearances.

After a week spent in these useless debates, Napoleon realized that he could not move the Czar, and at once made one of those quick changes of front for which he was so feared on

[1] Reports of Andréossy, February 1809.

the field of battle. He announced to Alexander that he should keep his grip on Prussia, and should continue to occupy the three fortresses on the Oder.

It was now the turn of Alexander to become excited, but Napoleon could not be turned from his purpose: "Is it my friend, my ally," he said, "who proposes to me to abandon the only position from which I can menace the flank of Austria, if she attacks me while my troops are in the South of Europe, four hundred leagues from home? . . . On the other hand, if you absolutely demand the evacuation, I will agree to it, but then, instead of going to Spain, I shall settle my quarrel with Austria." [1] Before this perspective, which alarmed him to the last degree, Alexander renounced his opposition.

Leaving to their ministers the task of putting in writing the points agreed on, the two emperors now suspended for a time their conferences, and devoted themselves to pleasure.

On the 4 October the company of the Théâtre-Français gave the *Œdipe* of Voltaire, and when an actor declaimed the verse:

L'amitié d'un grand homme est un bienfait des dieux,

Alexander rose, took the hand of Napoleon, who was seated beside him, and pressed it warmly. This scene, which has become historical, was greeted with prolonged applause by the audience, who thought that they saw in it a consecration of the entente, a renewal of the alliance.

Two days later, the emperors went to Weimar, followed by all the dignitaries who were then at Erfurt: the kings of Bavaria, Saxony and Würtemberg, the Prince Primate and all the princes of the Confederation of the Rhine, and many others. They had all been invited by the Duke of Weimar to attend a series of fêtes. The program began with a grand hunt, at which over four thousand persons assisted as spectators. In the evening there was a banquet at the palace, followed by a performance of the *Death of Cæsar* — a curious

[1] Papers of Caulaincourt.

choice, when Napoleon was surrounded by envious rivals, all ready to turn conspirators. At the ball, which ended the evening, Napoleon had a long conversation with Goethe and Weiland. Alexander opened the ball with the Queen of Westphalia. "The Emperor Alexander dances," wrote Napoleon to Joséphine, "but I, no: forty years are forty years!"

During the dinner Napoleon talked a great deal, and surprised all who were present by the extent of his information on many subjects. When some one expressed his amazement, Napoleon said: "At the time I was lieutenant of artillery the leisure of garrison life gave me much opportunity for reading and study." At the moment he invoked this souvenir, he was seated at table with the Czar of Russia, and the kings and princes of all the South German States, while behind him the principal nobles of Germany performed the duties of feudal domestics![1]

The following day, the Emperor was invited to a celebration of quite another character, which, under the circumstances, was in very bad taste. The Czar, and all the German kings and princes, escorted the Emperor of the French to the battle-field of Jena. In the centre of the plateau, where he had his bivouac two years before, was erected a Temple of Victory: it was the vanquished who thus celebrated their defeat! Upon this field the Duke of Weimar had commanded a Prussian division; the King of Saxony had lost half his troops; finally, the Czar of Russia had been beaten in the person of his ally, the King of Prussia. Nothing could better show the degree of servility to which the German princes had then descended in their relations with Napoleon. When, at Rome, the vanquished kings accompanied the chariot of the conqueror, their humiliation at least was not voluntary. Is it remarkable that Napoleon despised them all, and felt that they never would dare to turn against him? His contempt gave him a confidence which was unwarranted.

On their return to Erfurt, the emperors resumed their

[1] 4 Thibaudeau, 70.

regular, and rather monotonous life. In the morning, they worked with their ministers, answering the despatches from home. In the afternoon, they met for conferences, or rode together. There were almost daily reviews of the French troops passing through Erfurt on their way to Spain. Alexander was interested in everything military, and enjoyed these occasions. One day, when he had forgotten his sword, Napoleon offered his own, which the Czar accepted, with the words: "I will never draw it against Your Majesty." [1] Later, it was exhibited in the museum of the Hermitage at Saint Petersburg, near other trophies taken from the French during the Russian Campaign!

The sovereigns dined every evening with Napoleon, and afterward went to the theatre. The Emperor had ordered the hall arranged like that in the Czar's palace at home: on account of the deafness of Alexander, the seats of the two emperors were placed in the centre of the orchestra, facing the stage. The kings were seated beside them, and the princes and other dignitaries in the rear, behind a balustrade. In selecting the plays to be presented, Napoleon had followed his own tastes, which were for the old tragedies of Racine, Corneille and Voltaire. But his guests would have preferred something less classical, and were bored to death by fifteen days of the French chefs-d'œuvre.

For more than a year, there had been rumors throughout Europe that Napoleon intended to divorce Joséphine and marry a Russian princess. He no longer had any hopes of a child by the wife of his youth, and he felt the necessity of an heir to assure the future of his dynasty. But when he seemed on the point of making a decision, his courage failed him. Although he no longer loved Joséphine with the passionate devotion of the days of the Campaign of Italy, he was bound to her by ties of real affection, and of habitude. He had also a kind of superstition that she brought him good fortune, and that in separating from her he might at the same time

[1] 4 Thibaudeau, 70.

break his connection with the past, so full of happiness and glory.

The events of 1807 had almost decided him to take the final step. He had become convinced for the first time that it was possible for him to have a child of his own, and death had taken away the little son of Louis and Hortense, whom he intended to designate as his heir.[1] Finally, for the first time, he had contracted an alliance with one of the Great Powers, and the idea of cementing it by a marriage did not appear impossible. After his return from Tilsit, he treated Joséphine with marked coldness, and during the sojourn of the Court at Fontainebleau that autumn the subject was definitely broached for the first time.

Ever since his marriage, there had been war to the knife between the Bonapartes and the Beauharnais, and in this continual struggle two women were most prominent. Queen Hortense seemed to be the best guarantee of the fortunes of the Beauharnais. She was very popular in society, possessed many warm friends, and was loved by the Emperor as truly as though she were his own daughter. But, in 1807, her heart had been broken, and her health much impaired by the loss of her favorite son. She had retired from society, and this had left the field open to Napoleon's ambitious sister, Caroline Murat, Grande-Duchesse de Berg. Little by little, Caroline had gathered around her a strong coterie hostile to the Empress, to which Fouché, the Minister of Police, lent his powerful assistance.

Fouché desired a second marriage because he saw in it a means of securing the future of the Empire, with which his personal fortunes were bound up. Formerly he had been one of the partisans of Joséphine, but the crafty Minister of Police considered his own interests before anything else. Taking full advantage of his official position, he used every means to influence public opinion, and persuade the Emperor that, in repudiating Joséphine, he was yielding to the unanimous wish of his people.

[1] His first child, Léon, the son of Mlle. Dénuelle, was born at Paris, 13 December 1806, and Napoleon-Charles died at The Hague, 5 May 1807.

The rumor of the divorce, first put in circulation in the salon of Fouché, spread from Paris to all parts of the Empire, and soon was a topic of conversation in every capital in Europe. Nowhere did the gossip excite more interest than at Saint Petersburg. If Napoleon were divorced, it seemed almost certain that he would choose for his second wife a Russian princess. Alexander had two sisters who were unmarried. The younger, Anne, was an immature child of fourteen, frail and timid, who was rarely seen in public. The elder, Catherine, bore a strong resemblance to the great Empress, for whom she was named. Of a decided, imperious character, a firmness rare at her age, she seemed born to reign both over the hearts and minds of men. It was this charming princess who was designated by public opinion as the future empress and queen.

Alexander was both surprised and troubled when these rumors first reached his ears. No mention of the subject had been made at Tilsit; no overtures had come from the Tuileries, and Caulaincourt had received no instructions. If these unofficial reports were intended to sound public opinion, if they were followed by a formal demand, they would place Alexander in a very embarrassing position. It would be impossible to refuse without mortally offending the Emperor, and dealing a death-blow to the alliance. On the other hand, to accept this splendid mésalliance with the crowned soldier of fortune was contrary to the principles of the old dynasties.

Besides, there was an obstacle very difficult to overcome, in the Imperial family itself. One of the final acts of the late Czar had been, by a solemn ukase, to confide to his wife the right of regulating the lives of their daughters and disposing of their hands in marriage. It was therefore in the power of the Empress *mère* to oppose her veto to the plan; and in view of her well-known antipathy to "the murderer of the Duc d'Enghien," it was more than probable that she would refuse her consent. As the reigning Czar, it was possible for Alexander to break down all opposition, but the idea of commanding his mother was to him out of the question. It only remained, therefore, to endeavor gradually to overcome her

objections. Above all, it was important to be informed definitely as to the intentions of Napoleon as soon as possible. Accordingly, Roumiantsof wrote a very pressing letter to Tolstoi at Paris, praying him to make every effort to ascertain without delay whether such a demand would probably be made.

When the ambassador received this letter the Court was at Fontainebleau, and he was able to report that, although there had been much gossip in the salons of Paris, the project seemed to have been dropped for the present. In fact, Fouché had displayed *trop de zèle*, and for the moment had retarded the event which he hoped to bring about. He had ventured to write the Empress a letter in which he implored her to take the initiative and offer the divorce. Joséphine took this letter to the Emperor, who consoled and reassured her, and wrote his minister to stop meddling with affairs which did not concern him. Then he himself set out for Italy, leaving the whole question in suspense.[1]

Thus taken to task, Fouché kept quiet for a time, but soon renewed his propaganda. He felt sure that the divorce, although postponed, was inevitable, and that the Emperor would pardon him. He was ably seconded by Caroline, whose salon was the centre of the opposition to Joséphine.

When Napoleon arrived at Erfurt the following year, the matter was still in abeyance: he had not given up the idea, but could not yet find the courage to break with Joséphine. Therefore he was not ready to make a formal demand for the Grand Duchess Catherine, but authorized Talleyrand to approach Roumiantsof on the subject, and feel the ground. Talleyrand suggested that it would be better for him to speak directly with the Czar, and the Emperor acquiesced. He even went so far as to dictate the arguments to be used with Alexander. As his pride forbade any advances, he wanted to make Alexander speak first. "It is to see if he is truly my friend," he said; "if he takes a real interest in the happiness of France; for I love Joséphine; I shall never be happier; this

[1] See 3 *Mémoires de Mme. de Rémusat*, 278–315.

act will be for me a sacrifice." He then went on to speak of the necessity of an heir to assure the stability of the Empire. His brothers were incapable, and were not acceptable to the nation. There was Eugène, but an adoption was a "poor means of founding a dynasty." [1]

Alexander, after being discreetly sounded on the subject by Talleyrand and Caulaincourt, finally decided to speak to the Emperor. He said that he approved the desire, expressed by Napoleon's best friends, and shared by his faithful subjects, to see him consolidate his work and his dynasty by a fruitful marriage. Napoleon was much touched by these words, which he regarded as a new proof of the Czar's attachment to him. If he had then spoken more clearly, and made a demand for the hand of Catherine, the Czar would probably have given his consent, and used all his influence to overcome the objections of his mother. But Napoleon seemed to desire at that time not to commit himself irrevocably, and Alexander was very glad to leave matters in this uncertain state, in order to see how the political alliance turned out.

A week after Alexander's return to Saint Petersburg, the marriage of Catherine with the Duke of Oldenburg was officially announced. In the words of Caulaincourt, this prince was most unattractive: "He is plain, puny, covered with pimples, and articulates with difficulty." [2] But the Empress *mère* preferred for her daughter such a husband rather than the most splendid throne in Europe shared with a Corsican usurper!

On the 13 October Napoleon wrote his brother Joseph: "I have finished all my business with the Emperor of Russia." [3] In fact this famous conference, from which so much had been expected, was drawing to a close. The practical results can be summed up in a few words: The alliance was continued, although under somewhat strained conditions; the Principalities were reluctantly conceded to the Czar; and he was

[1] Papers of Caulaincourt.
[2] Letter to the Emperor, 23 November 1808.
[3] *Corresp.*, 14378

given a free hand in dealing with Sweden.[1] For himself, Napoleon had gained nothing except a breathing spell during which he could proceed, without danger of immediate interference, to regulate affairs in Spain: it was nothing less than a diplomatic defeat.

The following day the two emperors parted on the road to Weimar, near the spot where they had met two weeks before. After a very cordial farewell, Alexander entered his carriage, and proceeded to Weimar, where he passed the night. Napoleon, absorbed in his reflections, returned slowly to Erfurt, and left the same evening for Saint-Cloud.

[1] See 2 De Clercq, 284–286.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### 1808–1809

## THE PENINSULA CAMPAIGN

Napoleon Leaves for Spain — He Joins His Army — Madrid Reoccupied — The English Driven from the Peninsula — Futility of Napoleon's Triumph — His Reforms Rejected — Wrath of the Priests and Grandees — The Emperor Returns to Paris — Joseph Left in Command — Insubordination of the Marshals — Intrigues of Talleyrand and Fouché — The Former Called to Account — Alexander Visits the Prussian Royal Family — He Pays His Debt to Talleyrand — Roumiantsof Sent to Paris — Austria Continues Her Preparations — Metternich Returns to Paris — Napoleon Begins His Preparations for War — He Counts on Alexander — England Refuses to Negotiate — Napoleon Again Implores the Czar — His Pretended Confidence — The Prussian Royal Family Visit the Czar — Their Splendid Reception — No Political Results — Unsatisfactory Reply of Alexander to Napoleon's Note — His Secret Advice to Austria

ON HIS return from Erfurt, Napoleon remained only ten days at Saint-Cloud, and then left to place himself at the head of his troops in Spain. He was in haste to put down the insurrection there before Austria had time to begin the war which, in spite of her pacific assertions, seemed imminent. In September, one of his armies was closely invested at Barcelona, and the forces of Joseph, reduced to 50,000 men, were holding the line of the Ebro. But the fresh troops, called from Germany, were arriving daily.

The Spanish forces were much dispersed: Blake, with 50,000 men, was on the left, and Castanos, with 40,000 at the right. In second line, there were 20,000 men around Saragossa, and as many more at Burgos, with a reserve corps of 10,000 at Madrid. Finally, there was an English army of 25,000 men, ready to disembark.

By the end of October, Napoleon had 200,000 men ready to march into Spain — about half taken from Italy and southern France, and five corps brought back from Germany. The

Emperor reached Bayonne on the 3 November, crossed the frontier the next day, and joined his headquarters at Vittoria. Immediately on his arrival, the troops were set in motion. His strategy was a repetition of the manœuvre of Austerlitz on a larger scale: he broke the Spanish centre at Burgos, then turned against the two wings, which were easily beaten and dispersed. The road to Madrid was now open, and the capital surrendered on the 4 December.

In the meantime, the English army under Sir John Moore had advanced on Burgos. Napoleon immediately left Madrid with the Guard and Ney's corps, to cut off Moore's retreat, while Soult held him in front. But Moore learned of his danger in time and made good his escape. Napoleon then turned over the pursuit to Soult and Ney, who followed the English to the coast, and drove the remnants of the army back on their ships. Moore was killed and the British lost all their baggage and supplies.

The genius of Napoleon had apparently triumphed as usual: in four weeks he had reconquered all the North of Spain, vanquished and dispersed all the regular forces, and reinstated his brother in the capital. These results seemed immense: in reality they amounted to nothing at all. The whole country was in insurrection. Small guerrilla bands formed in the rear of the French advance and seriously interrupted the system of communications. The French held only the ground they occupied: outside that the country was in flames. With an entire misunderstanding of the Spanish character, Napoleon tried to overcome this opposition by bestowing on the nation the benefits of an enlightened legislation. The day of his entry into the capital, the inquisition was abolished, two-thirds of the convents suppressed, feudal rights annulled, the barriers between the provinces thrown down. Napoleon wished to confer upon Spain a reign of order in place of chaos, the light of the nineteenth century instead of the darkness of the Middle Ages, but the people did not understand his reforms, and would have none of them. The clergy, the monks, the grandees, saw, in the decrees of the Emperor, even greater perils than in the change

of dynasty. The mistake which Napoleon made in trying to place his brother on the throne was nothing in comparison with the suppression of the inquisition, the convents, and feudal rights. The wrath of the clergy and the grandees fanned the popular flame. Savage and implacable, the ignorant people rose as one man to repel those who would have relieved them from oppression.

On the first day of January 1809, near Astorga, Napoleon received a courier from Paris, bringing the news of the continued armament of Austria, and of the intrigues of Talleyrand and Fouché. He decided to leave at once for home. It was on this occasion that he performed the remarkable feat, for a man of his age, of galloping from Valladolid to Burgos, a distance of thirty leagues, in six hours, his horses being arranged in six relays. He arrived at Bayonne on the morning of the 19 January, and at the Tuileries four days later.

Before leaving Spain, Napoleon made the mistake of entrusting the chief command of his army to Joseph, with Marshal Jourdan as chief-of-staff and adviser. Joseph had no military capacity, and the marshals paid no attention to his orders. Arrogant and insubordinate, these generals fought only for their own glory, instead of the common cause. For the interests of France, the absence of the Emperor from Spain was not only a military disaster, but also a civil misfortune, as he alone had the prestige and the ability to prepare and accomplish the pacification of the interior, and organize the administration of the Kingdom.

During the absence of the Emperor in Spain a plot had been formed, in case of his death, to place Murat on the throne. At the head of this conspiracy were those arch-traitors, Fouché and Talleyrand. In former days these two men had been declared enemies. To Talleyrand, Fouché had owed his first disgrace, and he had showed his contempt of his rival on every occasion. All of a sudden, however, Talleyrand appeared in the salon of Fouché, and the latter was seen at the receptions of the Vice-grand-électeur: they were seen walking arm-in-arm, and, after a rupture of ten years, appeared to be

on most cordial terms. Perhaps they did not actually hope to see the Emperor perish by the knife of a fanatical monk, or the bullet of a guerrilla, but, if such a catastrophe arrived, they intended to be prepared. Murat was advised by his wife, who was at Paris, to have relays of horses arranged from Naples to the capital, so as to lose no time when he was called.[1]

The day of his return, Napoleon sent for his ministers to meet him at the Tuileries, and in their presence severely rebuked Talleyrand for his course. Of late years the Emperor had rarely forgotten his dignity in the face of witnesses, but on this occasion his wrath seemed to increase from moment to moment, and the cold impassibility of Talleyrand caused him entirely to lose his self-control. Following Talleyrand, who retreated, without uttering a word, to the wall of the room, Napoleon shook his fist, and cried: "And you deny the part which you took in the condemnation of the Duc d'Enghien![2] And you dare to say that you had nothing to do with the affairs of Spain!" Encountering no resistance from this man of marble, the wrath of Napoleon gradually subsided, and he became calm again.

But the Emperor took no further action beyond that of dismissing the prince from his office of Grand Chamberlain. After making an implacable enemy of Talleyrand, Napoleon left him still in a position of influence. Once more he failed to follow the wise axiom of Frederick: "Never maltreat an enemy by halves!"

Napoleon's leniency for the Minister of Police was even more inexplicable. Feeling perhaps that his usefulness outweighed his defects, the Emperor displayed no resentment toward him. Of course, Caroline was forgiven: Napoleon's indulgence for the faults and crimes of his family never knew any limits.

On his way home from Erfurt, Alexander passed two days at

[1] See 1 Pasquier, 353–360.

[2] In a note, dated 8 March 1804, Talleyrand suggested to the First Consul that he must bring about the death of the Duc d'Enghien to show that he was not playing the rôle of General Monk. This note disappeared from the French Archives in 1822. See Welschinger, *Le duc d'Enghien*, chap. XXI.

Königsberg with the royal family of Prussia, and left them convinced that under certain circumstances he would make their cause his own. A few days later, at Mittau, he arranged a marriage between the Princesse Sophie-Dorothée de Courlande, the future Duchesse de Dino, and a nephew of the Prince de Bénévent: he thus paid Talleyrand the price of his treason. Caulaincourt, who returned with the Czar, and who was ignorant of the relations of Talleyrand with the courts of Russia and Austria, kept up his correspondence with the former minister, and in one of his letters we read: "The Emperor often condescends to demand news of you, and honors with a constant interest the family he has given you."

In parting with Napoleon, Alexander had arranged to send Roumiantsof for a time to Paris, as special ambassador, to follow with Champagny the negotiations for peace with England. Tolstoi had been ordered to join the army on the Danube, and Roumiantsof, while retaining his ministerial functions, was to replace him, pending the arrival of the new ambassador, Prince Kourakine.

In order to bind closer the ties of his alliance, Napoleon spared no pains to win the new ambassador. Roumiantsof was fond of literature and art, so all the collections and museums of Paris were thrown wide open for him, and orders were given to prepare for him a library of rare works. The Emperor wished him to enjoy his visit, and prolong it as much as possible.

During the absence of the Emperor in Spain, Austria had hastened her preparations for war: the reserves, "called out only for exercise and instruction," were still mobilized. The Government still refused to recognize the new kings; and the French ambassador, Andréossy, formerly treated as a suspicious person, was now regarded as an enemy.

The Court of Vienna, it is true, had sent back to Paris the former ambassador, Metternich, who had been absent several months. When Champagny asked if he brought the recognition of Joseph and Murat, his reply was very hesitating and

confused. "I must say to Your Majesty," wrote the Minister of Foreign Affairs, under date of 3 January 1809, "that I have never seen M. de Metternich, who is usually at his ease and most matter-of-fact, so embarrassed in his expressions, and so confused in his language."

From this interview Champagny carried away the conviction that Austria was only awaiting the propitious moment to begin hostilities. From all the frontiers the French agents reported that she was pushing her preparations with feverish haste. From Valladolid, before leaving Spain, the Emperor himself gave some orders for the concentration of his troops. He reënforced the corps left in Germany, ordered one to approach the Danube, and called on the princes of the Confederation of the Rhine to complete their quotas. He also sent Eugène a plan for the defence of Italy, and ordered his Guard to take the route for France. These measures, for the moment, were only precautionary. Napoleon still counted on Alexander to contain and paralyze Austria. As he was ignorant of the treacherous conversations between the Czar and Talleyrand at Erfurt, and the disclosures of the latter to Metternich, he could not understand the confidence with which Austria continued her preparations.

On his way to rejoin the army, Tolstoi had passed through Vienna, and had seized the opportunity to display his anti-French sentiments. With the greatest assurance he guaranteed the friendly disposition of Russia; and from his former position his words took almost an official character.

Notwithstanding all of his rebuffs at Erfurt, Napoleon had not yet given up the idea of persuading Alexander to menace Austria. One of the many reasons for his precipitate return to Paris was the hope of finding Roumiantsof at the capital. Convinced of the uselessness of the overtures for peace made to England, the Russian ambassador had announced his departure. The English Government, in reply to the joint note of the emperors, had given the assurance that it desired peace, and was ready to enter into negotiations provided the Spanish Government, acting in the name of Ferdinand the

Seventh, took part! This was tantamount to refusing all negotiations, for they well knew that Napoleon would never accept this condition.

Before leaving Spain, Napoleon had sent a special courier to Saint Petersburg, charged with two letters, one for Alexander, conveying his wishes for a Happy New Year, and the other for Caulaincourt, ordering him to impress upon the Czar the urgent necessity of a joint note to Austria, in order to avert hostilities. That Government was to be summoned peremptorily to discontinue its warlike preparations, and if the response were not favorable, the French and Russian ambassadors were to demand their passports at once.

To Eugène, to his brother Jérôme, and to the South German sovereigns, at the same time, Napoleon writes in a tone of confidence which could hardly have been sincere. He claims that his relations with Russia had never been closer; that the Czar cannot understand the attitude of Austria, and is very indignant about her conduct; that if the Emperor Francis makes the first hostile movement, he will soon have ceased to reign! He apparently hoped that the echo of these fulminations would reach Vienna, and cause the Austrian Government to draw back at the last moment. His letters to Joséphine are also couched in the same terms of assurance. His dominating thought was to use the fear of Russia to terrify Austria and paralyze her efforts. Sixty years later, on the eve of the Franco-Prussian War, Bismarck used exactly the same tactics to keep Austria out of the fray, and with perfect success.

Before returning to their capital, which the French troops had now evacuated, Frederick-William and Queen Louisa went to Saint Petersburg to return the visits which Alexander had made to them at Berlin in 1805, and more recently at Königsberg. It is difficult to state whether they took this step upon their own initiative, or at the invitation of the Czar. However this may be, they had a splendid reception at the Russian capital, and "were treated at Petersburg as if Prussia had gained the battle of Jena."

In visiting Saint Petersburg the Prussian sovereigns had evidently counted upon the grace and beauty of Queen Louisa to have their usual effect upon the susceptible heart of Alexander. Their hopes were all the greater because for some months there had seemed to be a coldness between Alexander and the woman who had reigned over his affections for so many years, "la belle Narischkine." The absence of the favorite had seemed to bring about a reconciliation between the Czar and his wife, and to restore to the Empress "all her rights." These rumors evidently reached the ears of Napoleon, for in his letter of the 14 January we read: "Will Your Majesty permit me to wish you good health and a fine little autocrat of All the Russias?"

The King and Queen arrived on the 7 January, and were received by the Czar with full military honors. The garrison of forty-five thousand men was under arms, and lined the streets. At the Winter Palace, the visitors had a warm welcome from the two Empresses. Louisa was delighted to find in her rooms "a dozen dresses of every kind, in the best taste and of the greatest richness," and Caulaincourt relates in his *On dit* that the malicious gossips of the capital whispered that these gifts were the main object of the royal visit!

During the following days there was a succession of dinners, concerts, balls, and fêtes of every kind. Public business, as Caulaincourt complains in his despatches, was entirely suspended. The French ambassador was received by the King and Queen, not at the head of the diplomatic corps, but alone and privately, and he was the only one to give them a grand ball, in his sumptuous hôtel, where "toute la terre" defiled before the portrait of Napoleon.[1]

The anxiety of Caulaincourt over this visit was unnecessary, for the Prussian sovereigns gained no political advantage. Every one made fun of the awkward airs of the King, in his shako and faded uniform. Louisa tried in vain to overcome the unfavorable impression made by her husband. The trials of her life had affected her health and ruined her beauty:

[1] 3 De Maistre, 211.

she inspired sympathy, but no enthusiasm. Caulaincourt summed up the general impression in the words: "The Queen is no longer considered beautiful, although she does everything in her power to appear so." [1]

Alexander, as usual, was gallant, but it was evident that his homage was rendered to the unfortunate queen, rather than the beautiful woman. Besides, the old favorite, Mme. Narischkine, had now returned, and was present at all the fêtes: his heart was again conquered. In striking contrast with Louisa, who was always richly dressed, and covered with diamonds, Mme. Narischkine was simply robed, and wore no ornaments, but she put in her handsome dark tresses some flowers of "*ne m'oubliez pas.*"

A few days after the departure of the Prussian sovereigns, Alexander received the note of Napoleon calling upon him to take joint diplomatic action regarding Austria: "it was a thunder-clap from a sky in which the Czar obstinately refused to perceive any clouds." He was much disturbed over this appeal to render his alliance effective, and did not receive Caulaincourt until he had taken time for reflection. Then his attitude is thus stated in the report of the ambassador: "The hope of terminating political differences, as one arranges a family quarrel, flatters the philanthropic spirit of the Emperor to the point where no argument changes the base of his opinion." [2]

After discussing the matter fully with Caulaincourt, the Czar sent his reply to Paris. He agreed to make a joint demand on Austria to disarm, or at least to make an explanation, but his note did not contain the menace which alone could have changed the purpose of Austria and have averted the war. At the same time he wrote a long letter to Roumiantsof, all in his own hand, in pencil as usual, in which he displays his good-will, but obstinately persists in his error as to the intentions of Austria. At the end, he relates his first conversations with Schwarzenberg, the new Austrian ambassador, but is not

[1] *On dit*, January 1809. [2] Report of 22 February 1809.

frank enough to reveal what the latter states in his despatches to Vienna: his sympathy for Austria, and his secret hostility toward Napoleon. His advice to Francis, in a word, was to wait, to temporize, to search a better occasion: "*the hour of vengeance would sound some day!*" [1] From this report Austria rightly inferred that the Czar would not render his ally any effective assistance in the coming struggle.

[1] See Beer, 349.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### 1809

## WAR WITH AUSTRIA

The Mask Off at Last — Napoleon Prepares for War — He Calls on Alexander for Assistance — The French and Austrian Armies — Napoleon Leaves for the Front — Blunders of Berthier — Napoleon's Phenomenal Activity — He Is Wounded at Ratisbon — The Czar's Irresolution — Caulaincourt Demands His Coöperation — Napoleon Binds Himself Regarding Austria and Poland — Alexander's Duplicity — Evil Results of His Course — The Poles Invade Galicia — Anxiety of the Czar — Battle of Aspern and Essling — The French Forced to Withdraw — Death of Lannes — The Victory of Wagram — Armistice of Znaim — Napoleon Loses Confidence in the Alliance — News of the Russian Advance — New Cordiality — Napoleon's Difficult Position — The Russians Finally Enter Galicia — The Poles Defeated — The Russians Fail to Aid Them — The Only Russian Casualty

AUSTRIA had first expected to begin hostilities in the month of March, but was forced by the backwardness of her final preparations to put the date off until April. The first of March, Metternich received orders to advise the French Government that on account of the military precautions taken in the Confederation, she was forced to place her troops upon a footing of war. The mask was off at last!

Napoleon, for once, was taken by surprise. He wondered whether Austria was really foolish enough to begin the attack, or whether the notification was only a shrewd ruse to provoke him to take the initiative, and so absolve Alexander from the obligation to come to his assistance. In order to give Austria no pretext for war, up to the present moment the Emperor had taken only a few precautionary measures: his corps in Germany were widely dispersed, and the contingents of the Confederation were not united. But now he commenced in earnest his preparation for the combat. With his usual activity, quick as lightning, he made his arrangements. Davout was ordered to march on Bamberg, Oudinot on Augsburg, and Masséna on Ulm. In Italy, Eugène

was sent to hold the right bank of the Adige; in Northern Germany, on the flank of Austria, he assembled the Saxons and the Poles, to cover Dresden and Warsaw.

At the same time Napoleon spared no efforts to bring his ally to his aid. During the month of March, following the notification of Metternich, Champagny sent eight urgent messages to Caulaincourt in the space of three weeks. Napoleon himself also wrote personal letters to Alexander and to his ambassador. To the Czar he said: "There is not a moment to be lost, for Your Majesty to place your troops upon the frontiers of our common enemy. I have counted upon your alliance, but it is necessary to act, and I confide in you."

On the 8 April the Emperor issued the final orders for the organization of his army, He had six corps, under the command of Lannes, Davout, Masséna, Lefebvre, Augereau and Bernadotte, the cavalry reserve under Bessières, and the Guard, about 300,000 men in all.

The Austrian army, under the command of Archduke Charles, consisted of over 300,000 troops, with 100,000 landwehr in reserve. It was divided, on the French model, into ten corps: seven under Charles, ready to invade Bavaria; two under Archduke John in Italy; and one under Archduke Ferdinand, to enter Poland.

Military skill quite apart, the odds were not uneven, but the genius of Napoleon gave the French a marked superiority. His presence on the field of battle was always regarded by the enemy as equal to an army corps of fifty thousand men.[1]

Late on the evening of the 12 April, Napoleon learned by the semaphore telegraph that the Austrians had begun the war on the tenth, by crossing the Inn and invading the territory of his ally the King of Bavaria. Accompanied only by Joséphine, he left the Élysée at daybreak the following morning, and travelled directly to Strasbourg, making the five hundred kilomètres in exactly forty-eight hours. After a short rest, he crossed the Rhine to put himself at the head of his army.

[1] "His presence on the field," said the Duke of Wellington, "made a difference of 40,000 men." Quoted 2 Rose, 194.

On the last day of March, Berthier, the chief-of-staff, had been sent from Paris to take charge of operations until the Emperor himself should reach the front. He had explicit orders, in case the Austrians invaded Bavaria, to concentrate the army behind the Lech. Great was Napoleon's dismay, in arriving at Donauwörth on the morning of the 17 April, to find that Berthier had failed entirely to carry out his instructions. Charles, with nearly his entire force, was concentrated at Landshut on the Isar; while the French left wing, under Davout, was in danger of being cut off at Ratisbon, less than thirty miles to the north; and the right wing at Augsburg, seventy miles away, was equally isolated. If Charles had vigorously attacked the sparsely-held French centre, he might easily have broken through, defeated in turn the two wings, and driven Napoleon back to the Rhine. The only thing which saved the situation was his awe of his great antagonist, which robbed him of the push and purpose that he really possessed. Yet the Archduke was a commander of high rank, and, next to Wellington, perhaps the greatest of Napoleon's contemporaries.

Fortunately the Emperor arrived in time: in one day his master-mind had entirely changed the conditions. Placing himself in the centre, at Ingolstadt, with the German contingents, Napoleon ordered Davout at Ratisbon and Masséna at Augsburg to join him by forced marches. On the 20 April, at Abensberg, the Emperor severely defeated the Austrians and pierced their line. The following day, at Landshut, he annihilated their left wing. Then, turning back, on the 22 April between Eckmühl and Ratisbon he encountered the main army under Charles, who thought he had only the corps of Davout to deal with. Fighting with his usual obstinacy, that marshal held the enemy in check until Napoleon arrived on the scene with fresh troops. Although inferior in numbers, he attacked vigorously and forced the Austrians, after suffering enormous losses, to take refuge within the walls of Ratisbon. It was one of Napoleon's most brilliant victories, and to it Davout owed his title of Prince d'Eckmühl. The following

day the Austrians crossed the Danube and retreated into the wilds of Bohemia.

During the final attack on the city, while sitting on a hillock, talking with Duroc, Napoleon was struck in the right heel by a spent bullet — about the only wound he was ever known to receive, although several scars were found on his body after his death at Saint Helena. Hardly giving his surgeon, Yvan, time to treat the wound, the Emperor mounted his horse and rode along the lines, where he was greeted with enthusiastic cheers.

Napoleon was always more proud of this series of manœuvres than of any other he ever conducted. Never had he acted with more intense energy: he was always in motion, always present at the critical point, hardly taking time for food or sleep; for the last time he displayed all the activity of the days of the Campaign of Italy.

In his "Proclamation to the Army," issued the 24 April at Ratisbon, the Emperor stated that forty standards, one hundred cannon, and fifty thousand prisoners had been taken. In conclusion, he said, "Before a month we shall be in Vienna." He more than made good his prediction: on the 10 May he slept in the palace of Schönbrunn!

The appeals of Napoleon had found the Czar in his usual state of irresolution: he neither promised nor refused his coöperation. Formerly Napoleon had put off from month to month a positive decision regarding Turkey; now Alexander in turn had recourse to a dilatory diplomacy. He had a perfect genius for polite phrases and meaningless compliments, and to avoid committing himself he now covered Caulaincourt with his favors. More than ever, he treats the ambassador as an intimate friend, and invites him to dinner two or three times a week. On these occasions he seizes every opportunity to eulogize Napoleon and France. "After dinner," says Caulaincourt in his report of the 17 March, "the Emperor condescended to call me into his cabinet." There, still in the same tone, he protested his devotion and his loyalty, but

when pressed to take some action regarding Austria, once more expressed his desire to do nothing precipitate. During several weeks these scenes were repeated on every occasion.

When the news finally reached Saint Petersburg that Charles had crossed the Inn, that John had invaded Italy, and that Ferdinand had entered Poland at the head of fifty thousand men, the ambassador officially called on the Czar for his coöperation, in accordance with the stipulations of Tilsit and Erfurt. If Alexander were to keep his plighted word, only one course was now open to him: to aid France with all his power. His perplexity was great, and he did not know which way to turn. He dreaded to see Austria crushed, and the French power increased. Above all he feared to see the Poles arise, take possession of Galicia, and claim that province. Such an extension of the Grand Duchy would almost be equivalent to the reëstablishment of Poland.

With his usual foresight, Napoleon had realized that this situation might arise, and he had authorized Caulaincourt, if necessary, to sign an agreement as to the future conditions of peace, under which he bound himself not to dismember Austria, or to reëstablish Poland. This would enable the Czar to enter the war with entire confidence that Napoleon would not abuse his victory. But Alexander was not sincere enough to embrace the opportunity. Without making any conditions, he promised Napoleon his full assistance, but at the same time secretly resolved to do nothing, and to assure Austria that he would only go through the form of combating her. No monarch ever played a more despicable double game than this young Czar, who aspired to the title of "the first gentleman of Europe." [1]

A week later, when he could hesitate no longer, Alexander declared war on Austria, promised Caulaincourt to dismiss Schwarzenberg, and to recall his legation from Vienna. At the same time he wrote Napoleon: "Your Majesty can count on me; my resources are not very great, having two wars already on my hands, but everything possible shall be done. My

[1] 2 Vandal, 13.

troops are concentrated on the frontier of Galicia and could act shortly. . . Your Majesty will always find in me a true ally."

To the Austrian ambassador, who was *not* dismissed, Alexander held quite a different language. On the 15 April he assured Schwarzenberg that he should do everything "humanly possible to imagine to avoid striking a blow." [1] Five days later he reiterated his promises in even stronger form: he affirmed that his troops should be ordered to avoid all collisions, any acts of hostility; that furthermore their entrance into campaign should be carefully retarded.

During the next few weeks, Alexander massed on the frontiers of Galicia an army of sixty thousand men, under the command of Prince Galitsyne, but the troops did not advance. One excuse after another was given: the season was bad, the rain persistent, the rivers overflowing, the commander detained by the marriage of his son, and so on.

In default of acts, Alexander as usual was profuse in words. After the first victories, he was full of admiration over the valor of the French army and the genius of its commander. Why was he not at the side of Napoleon to share his glory and his dangers! As irrefutable evidence of the alliance he wished to have the Russian uniform seen at the French headquarters, and despatched two of his personal aides de camp, charged with compliments and flattering letters for the Emperor.

The studied inactivity of Russia was not only a violation of her obligations under the alliance, but also detrimental to her own best interests. If the Czar had come loyally to the support of France, and overrun Galicia with his troops, he would have prevented the patriotic uprising in that former province of Poland and the danger of its annexation to the Grand Duchy, an eventuality which he dreaded above all.

Austrian Galicia, more extended at that epoch than in our own times, occupying the two banks of the Vistula, bordered the Russian frontier for a distance of nearly four hundred

[1] Beer, 351.

miles. Between the two countries, there were no fortresses, no rivers, nothing which could impede the advance of the Imperial troops. In debouching into the Grand Duchy, which lay to the north and west of Galicia, Ferdinand had left this province without garrisons or regular troops, and open to invasion. In advancing on Warsaw, he had turned his back on Galitsyne, who had only to march in and take possession. The Russian army would then have been on the rear of the Archduke, and while rendering a signal service to the alliance would have assured the Czar against the risks of the future. The Polish uprising would have been prevented, and at the conclusion of peace Russia could have restored the province to Austria, or claimed it as the price of her coöperation.

Alexander did not have long to await the result of his lack of foresight. The Polish contingent, commanded by Prince Poniatowski, was compelled to retreat before the Austrian army, which greatly outnumbered it. Warsaw was abandoned, and the troops retired behind Praga on the right bank. In taking this direction, Poniatowski was cut off from Germany and his Saxon allies, but he remained in close touch with his compatriots in Galicia. Even before this move was suggested to him by Berthier, in the name of the Emperor, he resolved on his own initiative to carry the war into Austrian territory, and relieve Warsaw under the walls of Lemberg and Cracow. The curious spectacle was then presented of the two adversaries turning their backs on each other and marching in opposite directions: Ferdinand to the north to menace Dantzig, and the prince to the south to invade Galicia.

Poniatowski entered Galicia the first week of May, and the whole country rose at his approach. Volunteers flocked to his standard from every side. The Austrian officials, and the few garrisons left, either surrendered or retired. No serious resistance was encountered anywhere, and Lemberg was entered on the 23 May. Here a provisional government was organized for the province.

The news of these events created a tremendous sensation at

Saint Petersburg: the Czar felt that his worst fears were realized. It must be admitted that his apprehensions were justified. The agitation passed the frontiers, and a dangerous fermentation occurred in the provinces attributed to Russia in the three successive partitions. In some districts all the young men set out to enroll under the standard surmounted by the white eagle, the cherished ensign of Poland.

When the Czar claimed that these events could not have occurred without the approbation or the tolerance of Napoleon, Caulaincourt, with good reason, replied to his reproaches by pointing out that his own negligence and delays were the primary cause of all the trouble. Alexander was much affected by the undeniable truth of these statements, and the frankness of Caulaincourt's words, and even went so far as to embrace him when they parted.[1] He repeated his promise that his troops should receive orders to pass the frontier. There was less excuse now for delay, as the war with Sweden was approaching an end.

At the same moment the struggle between Napoleon and Austria was reaching a crisis. While the French were approaching Vienna by the right bank, the Austrian army under the Archduke Charles had marched down the opposite side of the Danube, and was now encamped in the plain of Marchfeld almost opposite the city. In 1805 Murat had won the Floridsdorf bridge by a *ruse de guerre*, but this time it had been destroyed. Napoleon was forced to cross the river in order to attack the enemy, and he did not wish to give them time to fortify the positions opposite the available crossings. Below the city there is a large island called Lobau, separated from the north shore only by a narrow channel, but from the other bank by several smaller islands, among which runs the main current of the river. This seemed to be the best point for crossing, and bridges were at once thrown over. On the edge of the Marchfeld, about a mile from the river, and nearly the same distance apart, were situated the villages of Aspern and Essling, which formed natural bastions. Both were

[1] Report of 28 May 1809.

solidly built of stone, and were surrounded by embankments to keep out the floods from the river.

As soon as the big bridge from the south shore was finished, pontoons were thrown across the narrow arm to the north bank, and the French army began to cross over. Masséna took possession of Aspern, and Lannes occupied Essling. The Archduke had laid his plans to wait until part of the French forces had crossed over, and then begin the attack. On the 21 May, when 40,000 French had passed the river, Charles assaulted their positions with 80,000 Austrians. Aspern was taken and retaken several times, and at evening remained in the hands of the Austrians, while the French still held Essling.

On the second day, when the Austrians were practically defeated, the bridges broke down, for the second time, and Napoleon ordered a retreat to Lobau. The French withdrew in good order, without losing a cannon, and destroying the pontoons behind them. At the close of the battle, Lannes was struck on the knee by a cannon ball: it was found necessary to amputate his right leg, and he died at Vienna the following week. He was the first of the marshals to lose his life and Napoleon was much affected by his death.

During the following month, Napoleon was employed in bringing up his reserves and making elaborate preparations for a new crossing. On the night of the 4 July, in stormy weather that favored his plan, ten pontoon bridges were thrown across the narrow Stadler branch at a point further east, where the Austrians did not look for a crossing. By noon on the following day, the whole French army was in line of battle opposite the Austrian position at Wagram, some six miles away. Napoleon attacked at once, but owing to the lateness of the hour did not accomplish much that day.

The grand-tactics of the battle of the 6 July were very similar to those of Austerlitz. Davout rolled up the Austrian left wing until it stood at right angles to its earlier position. Then Napoleon broke the Austrian centre by an attack which decided the fate of the day: at two o'clock the Austrians were

in full retreat. The victory was not as decisive as Austerlitz or Jena, owing to Napoleon's failure to follow up the enemy with his usual vigor. The reasons usually given are that his men had been fighting for thirty hours; that they had been almost without sleep for two nights, and had suffered greatly from the heat, and the lack of water: they were therefore nearly exhausted. But at the close of the battle, he had in reserve Marmont's corps and the Guard, over 20,000 men, so the real explanation probably is that, as after Friedland, he did not care to harass the defeated enemy, with whom he might later wish to make friends.

Charles, whose conduct of the battle had been excellent, withdrew his forces in good order. Followed by the French, he retreated to Znaim, where, five days after the battle, he proposed an armistice, which Napoleon immediately accepted.

In a remarkable letter which Napoleon had Champagny write Caulaincourt, under date of the 2 June, the Emperor expressed his grief over the conduct of the Czar, and stated in so many words that he no longer had any confidence in the Russian alliance.[1] A week later came the news that Galitsyne had issued a proclamation announcing his intention to enter Galicia. The Emperor put this information at the head of his next Bulletin.[2] Although it might have little actual value, it would serve to encourage his troops, reassure his allies, and disconcert the Austrians. From the first he had counted more on the moral than on the material value of the alliance, to hold Germany in check and isolate England. So long as France and Russia seemed united, there was little danger of the formation of another coalition against him. Even the shadow of an entente could impose on his enemies, discourage their rising, and break their resistance. After all, the Russian alliance had its advantages.

Under instructions from the Emperor, Champagny resumed the cordial effusions of Tilsit and Erfurt. Alexander had writ-

[1] See 4 Lefebvre, 211. [2] *Corresp.*, 15316.

ten: "Your Majesty will always find in me an ally and a faithful friend." Champagny replied: "The intentions of the Emperor Alexander are known perfectly by His Majesty, who can only congratulate himself on having such a faithful ally, and I would almost venture to say a friend so sincere." [1] Phrase for phrase, compliment for compliment!

In this difficult situation, Napoleon plays a prudent and a double game: putting aside once more the idea of a complete restoration of Poland, as incompatible with the Russian alliance, he takes pains not to undeceive the people of Poland and of Galicia; he rewards their leaders, but takes no action which compromises him with the Czar.

On the 3 June, nearly two months after the commencement of hostilities, about 45,000 Russians finally crossed the frontier and entered Galicia. At the same time, Ferdinand evacuated Warsaw, marched up the left bank of the Vistula, and took up a position opposite the Poles in Galicia. He occupied Sandomir, situated on both banks of the river, and the Poles encamped at a short distance from the same place, to await the arrival of the Russians, who would give them a great numerical superiority. But the latter advanced with exasperating slowness. However, on the 12 June, one corps, under the command of General Prince Souvarof, a son of the famous Russian marshal, arrived on the San, and took up a position near the Poles. The same day, the Austrians advanced to the attack, and Poniatowski, after a brave resistance, was forced to retreat. In vain he appealed to the Russians for assistance, even going personally to their headquarters for this purpose. "Traitorous conduct," cried Napoleon, on hearing of these events.

As it seemed impossible for the Poles and Russians to act in harmony, it was finally arranged that the two armies should separate and each guard a different bank of the river. The Russians carefully avoided any conflict with the Austrians, and the only encounter between them was the result of accident: several shots were exchanged, one man was killed and

[1] Letter to Caulaincourt, 10 July 1809.

two wounded.[1] This seems to have been the total of the Russian casualties during this bloody campaign! An Austrian officer was sent to the Russian headquarters to present his excuses for this accident.

[1] Rambaud, *Histoire de Russie*, 559.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### 1809

## THE PEACE OF VIENNA

The Plenipotentiaries Assemble — Basis of the Negotiations — Galicia to be Ceded — Views of the Czar — The Envoys Mark Time — Hopes of Austria — Metternich Suggests an Alliance — Napoleon Prefers the Russian Entente — Alexander Confides His Interests to the Emperor — He Advises Austria to Submit — Francis Sends Bubna to Vienna — General Desire for Peace — Napoleon Thinks of Replacing Francis — He Reduces His Demands — Alexander Speaks More Clearly — Napoleon's Wrong Interpretation — He Threatens Austria — Suggests the Czar as Arbiter — His *Coup de Théâtre* — His Reply to Francis — The Envoys Meet at Vienna — The Treaty Signed — Terms of the Peace — Napoleon Binds Himself As to Poland — Crisis of the Russian Alliance

AS SOON as the armistice was arranged Napoleon returned to Vienna and resumed his residence at Schönbrunn, where he remained until the peace was signed three months later. From the summer palace of the Habsburgs, he governed his empire and conducted the negotiations with Austria.

The middle of August the plenipotentiaries assembled in the little city of Altenburg, on the border of Hungary, just within the lines of the French occupation. M. de Champagny, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, represented the Emperor, and the Austrian mission was composed of Comte de Metternich and General Baron de Nugent. Napoleon had invited the Czar to send an envoy, armed with full powers, to represent the interests of Russia at the conference, but he failed to do so. This action was unfortunate, as the time necessary to communicate with Saint Petersburg retarded the work of the ministers, and kept important questions in suspense for many weeks.

In arranging the terms of peace, Napoleon endeavored so far as possible to meet the views and quiet the fears of his ally.

As a basis for the negotiations he held that the vanquished nation should suffer a considerable loss of territory, as well as a reduction in its military power, and the payment of a large indemnity. From every point of view, the territory to be detached seemed to be designated in advance: Galicia should be severed from the Austrian Empire, either in whole or in part. Napoleon considered himself in honor bound not to replace under the Habsburg yoke a people who had aided his cause and compromised themselves for him. But it was not so easy to decide what disposition he should make of this province.

His first idea was to erect Galicia into a sovereign state, and give it to the Grand Duke of Würzburg. This prince was a brother of the Emperor Francis, but a friend and great admirer of Napoleon. Transferred to Cracow, he would give up his estates in Germany, which would then be at the disposition of the Emperor, to use in rewarding some one of his adherents. From a remark made later by Alexander, this arrangement would not have displeased him,[1] but Napoleon abandoned the plan because he thought that it would increase the fears of the Czar to have a second independent state erected on his frontiers.

What Napoleon really desired was to strengthen the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, a state created by him, and devoted to his interests, but he was very much in the dark as to how the Czar would view any further increase in the territory of Warsaw. In a conversation with Caulaincourt, about the middle of July, Alexander vaguely indicated two plans: "Leave Galicia to Austria, or make arrangements which will not affect the position of Russia, or cause apprehensions regarding her safety."[2] Napoleon quickly arrived at the decision that whatever part of Galicia was severed from Austria should be allotted, four-fifths to himself, and one-fifth to the Czar. To equalize, in a certain degree, this disproportion in the division of the spoils, he would bind himself formally in writing never to

[1] Letter of Caulaincourt, 13 September 1809.
[2] Report of Caulaincourt, 17 July 1809.

restore Poland entirely. Realizing the difficulty and the danger of this solution, Napoleon instructed Caulaincourt, on the 12 August, to ascertain how the Czar viewed the matter. Caulaincourt was urged to forward his reply at the earliest possible date. Meanwhile, the Emperor directed his representative at Altenburg to confine his discussions to general matters. He also insisted that a *procès-verbal* should be kept of the proceedings at the conference, and the report sent promptly to Saint Petersburg, in order to avoid false rumors about what was discussed. Established in the heart of Austria, occupying her finest provinces, "eating and drinking at her expense," [1] Napoleon could afford to take his time while awaiting the information from Russia upon which to base his final decision.

It soon transpired that Austria also had adopted a policy of delay, with the same view of ascertaining the position of Alexander. Somewhat recovered from the shock of Wagram, Francis seemed inclined to resume hostilities rather than submit to a dishonorable peace. He based his hopes on an uprising in Prussia, the success of the Walcheren expedition of England, or a French reverse in Spain, but above all on favorable news from Russia. "We must sound Russia," he said to Metternich, "and put ourselves in shape to resume the fight." [2] While awaiting a reply to his personal letter to Alexander, Francis ordered his envoys to mark time up to the end of August, and to take advantage of this delay to discover the intentions of Napoleon.[3] Restrained by these instructions from both sides, the negotiations dragged along without accomplishing anything.

Outside of the formal meetings, however, some progress was made in clearing up the situation. While Nugent, who was a soldier rather than a diplomat, showed much resentment, Metternich, on the other hand, displayed great good-will. He sought every opportunity to see M. de Champagny, and to be agreeable to him. The French minister kept open house, and gave many dinners and receptions, at which the Austrian

[1] *Corresp.*, 15816. [2] 2 Metternich, 307. [3] *Ibid.*

ladies were present. On the occasion of the fête given the 15 August in honor of Napoleon, Metternich proposed a toast to "The Peace," to the great indignation of his colleague.

Metternich, however, had outlined in his talks with Champagny, the kind of peace he had in mind: the restoration of the conquered provinces, a lasting reconciliation, cemented by an alliance — in a word, a peace on the model of that concluded two years before between France and Russia on the banks of the Niemen.[1] "To imitate Russia, with the secret thought of taking her place in the favors of Napoleon, such was to-day his object, his hope; and the dream which he cherished would have been to attach his name to an Austrian Tilsit." [2]

In his personal interviews with M. de Champagny he returned constantly to the same subject. An alliance with Austria, he said, would have been the true means for Napoleon to reach his end, to pacify Europe, and overthrow England: "the Emperor failed to seize at Presburg the finest occasion of his reign." [3] However, the occasion lost in 1805 might be found again in 1809. Enlarging on his topic, he confirmed the opinion held by Napoleon from the first, that a firm stand on the part of Russia would have averted the war. And what had she done during the war? "She had not fired a volley, and had only shed the blood of the Poles." He continued: "We can serve you as well as Russia, and perhaps more constantly, for our Cabinet has not such a vacillating policy: let us enter your system and you will be sure of us. It is upon this base, honorable for us, useful for you, that we have counted on making peace." [4]

It would have been well for Napoleon if he had taken this course. "The only statesman-like alternatives were, to win Austria's friendship by generous treatment, or to crush her to the earth so that she could not rise to strike another blow." [5] Napoleon adopted neither alternative. His mind still possessed

[1] 2 Metternich, 305.
[2] 2 Vandal, 131.
[3] Letter of Champagny, 13 September 1809.
[4] *Ibid*, 18 August.
[5] 2 Rose, *Life of Napoleon*, 174.

by the English *vendetta*, Russia, with her extensive seacoast, seemed of far more value to his Continental System than Austria, whom he proposed to rob of her only remaining port. He therefore preferred the uncertain alliance of Alexander to the gratitude and friendship of Francis. For the second time he stood at the parting of the ways, and again he took the wrong path. With all his great qualities, Napoleon lacked the true instincts of a statesman.

On the first of September an aide de camp of Alexander arrived at Vienna: he was the same Colonel Tchernitchef who had been present at Wagram on the staff of Napoleon. He was not an accredited envoy, but he brought personal letters from the Czar to Napoleon and Francis. In his letter to the Emperor, after expressing his satisfaction over the prospects for peace, Alexander places his interests entirely in the hands of his ally, counting formally upon his friendship: "Your Majesty sees all the frankness and all the openness of confidence which I place in you; I have the right to expect that you will use the same toward me." [1]

From this letter only one conclusion could be drawn: having allowed Napoleon to bear the brunt of the war, Alexander placed on his shoulders the burden of making peace. He confided his interests to Napoleon, and put himself entirely in his hands. This placed the Emperor in a most embarrassing predicament. The interests of Russia were summed up in the one word: *Poland*. How could the treaty be drawn so as not to revive the fears of the reëstablishment of that unfortunate kingdom? To Champagny he wrote: "I have several plans, but I will never consent to expose to the vengeance of the House of Austria those who have welcomed us in that province [Galicia]." [2]

The letter from Alexander to Francis was brief, polite, and meaningless. He discreetly advised Austria to make peace, and excused his inability to contribute to the result on account of his distance. "It would have been a great consolation to me," he said, "to offer my good offices, and to bring about a re-

[1] 19 *Corresp.*, 480, note. [2] *Corresp.*, 15744.

union of interests and friendship between Austria, France, and Russia." [1] His letter on the whole was calculated to favor the interests of Napoleon, and it certainly had this effect. There was evident at once a change in the tone of the Austrian plenipotentiaries. With shrewd diplomacy, they made haste to offer Galicia, having seen, in that province, a point of dissension between France and Russia. They looked upon it as the least valuable of their possessions, and as the one most likely to raise difficulties between Napoleon and Alexander.

The Emperor of Austria, however, before deciding finally to resume the war or to resign himself to peace, wished to ascertain at first hand the final word of the conqueror. He therefore wrote a personal letter to Napoleon, and sent it to Vienna by the hand of one of his aides de camp, General Comte de Bubna.

On his arrival at Vienna, the 9 September, Bubna was struck by the universal desire for peace expressed on all sides, both by the Austrians and the French. All the members of the Emperor's staff were tired of their stay at Vienna and anxious to be back in Paris. From this feeling Napoleon himself was not exempt, as appears in his letters to Joséphine at this time. He was in haste to finish with Austria in order to give his time to other enterprises — particularly the war in Spain.

Although the thought of the Austrian marriage had not yet entered his mind, Napoleon was tempted to try the experience of an alliance with the House of Habsburg. In the last campaign Austria had shown energy and military force: at Essling her troops had fought as stubbornly as the Russians at Eylau. The greatest obstacle would lie in the feeble, vacillating character of the Emperor, and for a moment Napoleon thought of replacing him by his brother Ferdinand, or the Archduke Charles. He even suggested the idea to Bubna, who said that the Emperor would do whatever was called for by the best interests of his country. But Napoleon, who realized the delicacy of such a question, did not put it in the form of a demand.

[1] 19 *Corresp.*, 480.

In order to hasten the conclusion of peace, Napoleon now made concessions from his first demands. Having asked for nine million souls, to have five, he agreed to accept four. He succeeded so completely in subjugating Bubna that the latter talked of returning to the Austrian headquarters and "arranging matters in twenty-four hours." Napoleon, however, was not yet ready to let him depart: he had Bubna write his Court and formulate the proposition, on the basis of population, avoiding for the present the designation of the territory to be ceded, as he was still waiting for more definite advices from Russia.

It was not the fault of Caulaincourt that the attitude of Russia was still unknown. The ambassador had shown great zeal and energy in searching for information. Unfortunately, the Emperor was laid up as the result of an accident, and the Minister of State was out of town. Roumiantsof had gone to Finland to meet the Swedish envoys and sign a triumphant treaty of peace, which ceded that province to the Empire, as well as the Aland Islands, and which was to win him the title of chancellor. Caulaincourt called every day to inquire regarding the health of the Czar, who received him for an hour or two, and conversed in a friendly way, but avoided all political topics. When the ambassador finally succeeded in bringing up the question of the peace, he found it impossible to obtain any definite opinion from Alexander: he was even more vague than usual.

At last, on the 28 August, Alexander expressed himself more clearly: "You know that I am not a difficult person. As an individual, I admire the Emperor Napoleon; as a sovereign, I revere him, and besides I am really attached to him. I only search for the best way to smooth out the difficulties, avoid differences, and forestall, consequently, any cause for war; moreover, I wish to maintain the alliance. Therefore I desire to be in accord with you, but in a manner reasonable for my country, and which assures the future tranquillity of Europe."

Caulaincourt then asked whether the Czar would advise

the Emperor to deliver up those who had served him to the vengeance of his enemies, and Alexander replied:

"I have already told you what I think about that matter. As I do not desire to raise between us an unsurmountable barrier, I will add that I am not so unreasonable as to oppose the acquisition by the Grand Duchy of a district in Galicia, if that province is taken from Austria."

Encouraged by this unexpected concession, the ambassador brought up the point of the unequal division between Warsaw and Russia, but the Czar again drew back. "Assure the Emperor Napoleon," he said, "that I have no other view than to be in accord with him, but I cannot sacrifice the interests of my Empire." It was impossible to draw out of him anything more positive.[1]

Caulaincourt immediately sent a literal detailed report of this interview, which reached Napoleon on the 12 September. Reading the despatch in the light of his own desires, the Emperor assumed that he was now free to act. It was sufficient to him that Alexander no longer put a formal veto on the extension of the Grand Duchy: he paid no attention to the phrases qualifying that assent. With his usual impetuosity, and disregard for the rights of others, he concluded that, so long as Russia had yielded on this point, she would acquiesce in all his designs.

Under the empire of this fallacious reasoning, Napoleon made his final decision. The 15 September he sent away Bubna with a reply to the letter of Francis, and at the same time despatched an ultimatum, setting forth the losses in population to which Austria must submit. He demanded one million six hundred thousand in Illyria, four hundred thousand on the Danube, and two millions in Galicia, "to divide between the King of Saxony and Russia." He then wrote Champagny to press the negotiations as much as possible.[2]

Bubna returned to Vienna on the 20 September and was received by Napoleon the same evening. "What do you bring, peace or war?" demanded the Emperor. Then, without

[1] Letters of Caulaincourt, 29 August 1809. [2] *Corresp.*, 15817.

even opening the letter of Francis, which he put in his pocket, he cried furiously that Austria did not want peace. Referring to the insistence with which Galicia was offered, he declared that they were endeavoring less to negotiate seriously than "to throw an apple of discord between him and Russia." In this game, he continued, Austria would risk her existence. If the war were recommenced, he would pursue it *à outrance;* he would dethrone the dynasty, separate the States, and keep possession of the territory occupied by his troops. He then discussed and justified one by one the points of his ultimatum. When Bubna objected that Austria could not give up Trieste, and lose all contact with the sea, the Emperor replied: "In that case war is inevitable. Will you break the armistice, or shall I?" Napoleon then threw his hat across the room, his gesture of great anger, and retired to the embrasure of a window, where he seemed to be absorbed in a profound meditation. Suddenly, as if struck by a new idea, he turned, and exclaimed with great vivacity: "Do you know what remains for us to do? If your Emperor finds my terms too hard, let him refer them to Russia as arbiter! We will conclude an armistice for six months: the Czar will send an envoy to Altenburg, and I will abide by his decision." [1]

Never did Napoleon display to greater advantage his marvellous histrionic ability! This *coup de théâtre,* which he had prepared and executed with supreme art, had a tremendous effect. The Austrians would not fail to say: "If the Emperor Napoleon himself offers with so much assurance to place his cause in the hands of Alexander, he must feel very sure of Russia: that Court has doubtless been consulted in advance, and approves of the terms submitted." In making this proposition, Napoleon was very certain of his ground, for Metternich had let drop the remark at Altenburg: "We cannot remain another three months in this position: we must have peace or war." [2]

After this interview with Bubna, which had lasted three hours, Napoleon read the letter from Francis and drafted his

[1] Beer, 440, 442. [2] Letter of Champagny, 18 August 1809.

reply. It was harsh and bitter in its terms, but became milder at the end, where he said:

"I am so presuaded that the right is on my side . . . that I will consent to the meeting of a general congress, to which shall be admitted even the plenipotentiaries of England; and I propose that you and I, Monsieur mon Frère, shall submit our case to the arbitration of the Emperor Alexander. By this last proposition, I certainly give the most striking proof of my repugnance to shed blood, and my desire to reëstablish the peace of the Continent." [1]

Upon reflection, Napoleon decided not to send this letter, as being too harsh in terms; but he communicated the substance of it to his envoys, as a basis for their final negotiations. In the face of the appalling perspective, indicated by Napoleon, the courage of Francis oozed out: it was not worth while to risk his crown to save a few provinces.

In order to hasten the conclusion of peace, the conferences at Altenburg were suspended, and all the envoys met in Vienna. The Austrian plenipotentiaries, Bubna and Lichtenstein, were authorized to accept the terms of the French ultimatum, subject, if possible, to some concessions in minor points.

Under the personal supervision of the Emperor, the negotiations were pushed rapidly to a conclusion. In order to flatter the *amour-propre* and the patriotism of the Austrian envoys, Napoleon made several minor concessions. He allowed Austria to retain three-fifths of Galicia, which he thought would please Alexander, even though Russia lost Lemberg, the only point of much value which figured in her allotment. He also reduced the indemnity to seventy-five millions.

Exceeding their powers,[2] on the 14 October, Lichtenstein and Bubna signed the treaty, subject to the ratification of their master. Without waiting for this, Napoleon announced the peace, by salvos of artillery, and started for Paris. There was such an explosion of popular joy, that Francis did not dare to withhold his signature, and submitted to the inevitable.

[1] *Corresp.*, 15824

[2] Mowat (229) denies that this was the case.

By the Treaty of Vienna, Austria lost three and a half million subjects: four hundred thousand passed to Bavaria, twelve hundred thousand were added to French Illyria, fifteen hundred thousand went to the King of Saxony, as Duke of Warsaw, and the remaining four hundred thousand to Russia.[1]

In order to appease the Czar, who might well feel dissatisfied with his small share of the spoils, in an official letter to Roumiantsof, under date of the 20 October, Champagny writes:

"The Emperor wishes not only to destroy the idea of the renaissance of Poland, so far from his thoughts, but he is disposed also to concur with the Emperor Alexander in every measure which can wipe out the recollection in the hearts of the ancient inhabitants. *His Majesty approves that the words Poland and Poles shall disappear, not only from all political transactions, but even from history.*"[2]

However just may have been Napoleon's treatment of Russia, he had nevertheless made a grave political blunder, full of fatal consequences for the future of the alliance. "It was more than they had won," said the Emperor, and this was true. Napoleon, as one of his historians observes, had in the highest degree the loyalty of the field of battle; this artful politician was a soldier beyond reproach; he had the religion of the service rendered, and no one ever saw him dispute the price of blood shed in his cause. If Russia had come generously and unreservedly to his assistance, as the conditions of the alliance demanded, Alexander could have claimed any recompense within reason, and Napoleon would have fully accorded it. As it was, the Czar got all that he deserved, and more.[3]

The Polish question, born at Tilsit, with the creation of the Duchy, aggravated by the terms of the new peace, was now almost beyond the possibility of a satisfactory solution. The Peace of Vienna marked the supreme crisis of the Russian alliance.

[1] For a summary of the treaty, see Mowat, 230–231.
[2] Champagny to Roumiantsof, Russian Archives. [3] 2 Vandal, 164.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### 1809

## MARRIAGE NEGOTIATIONS

Napoleon Arrives at Fontainebleau — He Decides to Begin Negotiations for a New Alliance — His Preference for the Grand Duchess Anne — Her Mother an Impediment — Caulaincourt's Observations — Napoleon's Attitude — He Returns to Paris — Gay Life of the Capital — Champagny Opens Negotiations — Caulaincourt Asked to Report Fully — Russia Demands Assurances Regarding Poland — Napoleon Agrees — The Divorce Announced to Joséphine — Napoleon's Address to the Corps Législatif — Its Favorable Effect on Russian Affairs in the East — The Formal Demand Sent to Russia — Napoleon's Declaration Regarding Poland

UPON his return from Vienna, instead of going to Paris, Napoleon went directly to Fontainebleau, where he had summoned Joséphine, his confidential ministers, and the princes of his family. He came back with his mind absolutely decided on the divorce. The hazards of the last campaign, during which his fortunes had more than once trembled in the balance, had finally convinced him of the necessity of assuring the permanency of his work by giving a direct heir to his dynasty. For two years he had been in a state of indecision, but now his mind was settled. It was his intention during the stay at Fontainebleau to prepare Joséphine for the sacrifice, and to persuade her, if possible, to descend voluntarily from the throne.

At the same time, he wished to begin negotiations for a new matrimonial alliance, and to prepare the minds of his people. "To govern better the imaginations of men, Napoleon considered it indispensable never to let them be troubled or led astray by the prolonged expectation of great events." [1] He therefore wished to make the period of transition between the two empresses as short as possible: when Joséphine de-

[1] 2 Vandal, 174

scended from the throne, there must be another princess ready to take her place by his side. At the moment his preference was for the Grand Duchess Anne, the sister of Alexander.

This choice was natural, and practically designated in advance. The question was not a new one between him and Alexander, as it had already been brought up at Erfurt. At that time, the elder sister, Catherine, had been considered, as Anne was then too young. Since then Catherine had been married, and the choice at present was confined to Anne, who was now nearly fifteen, and presumably sufficiently mature for marriage. Before considering any other alliance, Napoleon thought himself in "honor bound" [1] to resume and bring to a head the negotiations informally begun at Erfurt. Otherwise he might furnish the Czar with a legitimate subject of discontent, and strike another blow at the entente.

Having reached this decision, the important question remained: What was the best way to begin the negotiations? At Erfurt, Alexander had indicated an impediment, without suggesting any means of removing it. If a family alliance, he had said, was his dearest hope, it was not himself, but his mother who would make the decision: the Empress Dowager had retained all authority over her daughters, and would marry them as she wished; the will of the late Czar, expressed in a solemn act, had given his wife this right.

Since the meeting at Erfurt, where he was present, Caulaincourt, upon his own initiative, without any formal instructions from the Emperor, had constantly endeavored to obtain new light on this subject. He had observed that, on all formal occasions, while the Czar posed as chief of the State, his mother appeared as head of the family. The day of the betrothal of Catherine and the Duke of Oldenburg, it was the Empress *mère* who presided over the ceremonies in the chapel of the Winter Palace, who gave the hand of her daughter, and received their homages. He had also remarked the extreme care of the Czar to efface himself, and to appear only as a witness, "like a private individual." [2] In a letter to the Em-

[1] *Corresp.*, 16210. [2] *On dit*, January 1809.

peror, in February 1909, Caulaincourt had advised his master that "the first official approaches must be made to the mother."

Napoleon considered himself too strong and too great to follow such a course: "What had he to do with the will of a woman; to defer, to her, reasons of State!" Besides, he could not imagine that the Czar of All the Russias was not master of his own household: if Alexander set up the opposition of his mother, it was only a pretext, not a reason.

Although the sojourn at Fontainebleau had not advanced the question of divorce, as Napoleon had not yet found courage to announce his decision to Joséphine, he decided a few days before their departure for Paris to take the matter up at once with the Czar. He had invited the King of Saxony to visit him at Paris, and the arrival of that monarch hastened his return to the capital. On the 14 November, at the head of a large military escort, the Emperor left for Paris, where he arrived at nightfall. Joséphine was compelled to make the journey alone in her carriage. The following days he received at Tuileries his ministers and the diplomatic corps. With the return of the sovereigns, the gay life of the capital was resumed: every evening there were dinners, concerts, balls, special performances at the Opéra and the theatres. A little later there arrived the kings of Würtemberg, Holland, Naples, and Westphalia: Paris became again "le séjour des rois." Never had the Court been so gay as during these last days of the Empress Joséphine.

A week before the announcement of the divorce, on the 22 November, the Emperor instructed Champagny to write Caulaincourt a letter, which, for the sake of greater secrecy, the minister was ordered to code himself. It was worded as follows:

"Monsieur l'ambassadeur, you know the entreaties made to the Emperor for a long time past by the men most attached to his person and to the great interests of his dynasty. These approaches have been for a long time without result; however, everything leads me to believe that, after having profoundly

reflected on the situation of France and of his family, the Emperor is finally about to decide upon a divorce. . . .

"At Erfurt the rumors of a divorce came to the ears of the Emperor Alexander, who must [recall] having spoken to the Emperor about them, and having said to him that the Princess Anne, his sister, was at his disposition. The Emperor desires you to take up the matter, frankly and simply, with the Emperor Alexander, and speak to him in these terms:

" 'I have reason to think that the Emperor, pressed by all France, is preparing for a divorce. May I announce that we can count on your sister? Let Your Majesty think the matter over for two days, and give me a frank reply — not as to the French ambassador, but as to a person devoted to the two families. It is not a formal demand which I make; it is a frank statement of your intentions which I solicit.' . . .

"You will not speak of this matter with M. de Roumanzof [Roumiantsof] under any pretext whatsoever; and when you have had this conversation, as well as that which should follow it two days later, you will forget entirely this communication.

"There remains for you to let us know the qualities of the young princess, and above all the epoch that she may be in a condition to become a mother, for, in the actual calculations, six months of difference are an object.

"It is not necessary for me to recommend to Your Excellency the most inviolable secrecy; you appreciate what you owe in this respect to His Majesty." [1]

Of course, the injunction for secrecy, too customary in such cases to deceive any one, had for its object the guarding of the dignity of the two emperors in case the plan failed. Besides, it was second-nature with Napoleon, in all cases, to avoid committing himself definitely to any proposition, while striving to bind the other party. In this instance his tactics were also justified by the reasonable doubt as to the maturity of the princess. The sole reason and excuse for the divorce was the necessity of giving as soon as possible an heir to the Empire: before making a formal demand, therefore, he wished to be

[1] Russian Archives. See also 9 Bignon, 64–65.

assured upon this delicate point, as well as whether the proposition would be accepted.

The letter to Caulaincourt was coded, and ready to be despatched, when Napoleon was informed that Russia demanded written assurances against the reëstablishment of Poland, which Caulaincourt had not dared to give. The text of the Treaty of Vienna, received by the ambassador on the 27 October, had been transmitted immediately to the Czar. Alexander was much dissatisfied with the provisions regarding Galicia; and the letter, proposing to efface the name of Poland, which came ten days later, was too late to repair the damage already done. Alexander expressed himself, however, as willing to accept the guarantees offered, provided they were put in a form strictly binding on France: he was no longer willing to accept the simple word of Napoleon!

The courier was held back while Champagny wrote a political despatch ordering Caulaincourt to sign such an agreement at once, "in a frank and open manner which removes every suspicion and every *arrière-pensée*, by proving that we have none."

The courier was again on the point of starting when M. de Rumigny, a relative of the Duc de Vicence, entered the hôtel of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He had come directly from Saint Petersburg, and brought the advice that the Czar would be content with nothing less than a treaty. Napoleon, who was impatient to have nothing stand in the way of the accomplishment of his desires, directed Champagny to add a postscript to his second despatch, giving Caulaincourt *carte blanche* to sign a convention. There was no time to go into details, and the ambassador was left entirely to his own discretion. In general terms he was told to refuse nothing which would dispel all ideas of the reëstablishment of Poland. Giving way to the passion of the moment, the Emperor "offers implicitly to the Czar to deliver up Poland to him as the price of a grande-duchesse." [1]

[1] 2 Vandal, 186.

On the last day of November, two weeks after their return from Fontainebleau, Napoleon finally found the courage to break the news to Joséphine. At the first mention of the word "divorce," she fell on the floor, apparently in a swoon. Calling to his aid the prefect of the palace, Baron de Bausset, who was on duty, they carried the Empress down the narrow, dark, winding staircase to her apartment on the ground-floor. Here Napoleon placed her in the charge of her women, and withdrew with tears in his eyes.

When Eugène, who had been called from Italy, arrived a few days later, he found his mother more calm, and apparently resigned to her fate. It only remained to agree with the Emperor and the Empress upon the arrangements to be made, and the formalities to be carried out; everything was settled with a dignity worthy of such a great event.

The divorce arranged, Napoleon was in haste to conclude the new marriage, which he hoped could take place by the end of January. To make his formal demand for the hand of the Grand Duchess Anne, he only waited now to be enlightened upon the two points in doubt: the favorable disposition of the Russian Court, and the maturity of the young princess, for the necessity of an heir to France could not be delayed another year.

While awaiting the reply from Russia, the Emperor neglects no means to prepare the minds of his people, and propitiate his ally. At the opening of the Corps Législatif, the first week in December, he says in his address: "My ally and friend, the Emperor of Russia, has united to his vast Empire, Finland, Moldavia, Wallachia, and a district of Galicia. I am jealous of no benefit which can accrue to this Empire; my sentiments for its illustrious sovereign are in accord with my politics." [1]

His phrase regarding the Principalities had the effect of a declaration against his former friend, Turkey, and was very helpful in reëstablishing the badly compromised affairs of Russia in the East. The operations of the Czar's armies along the Danube had not been successful during the summer, and

[1] *Moniteur*, 4 December 1809.

the latest news was decidedly unfavorable. Encouraged by the unexpected turn of events, the Turks had showed themselves less disposed than ever to cede the two provinces. At the request of Napoleon, the agreement between the two emperors at Erfurt had thus far remained a secret. To-day, in order to serve Russia, Napoleon tears aside the veil, announces the incorporation of Moldavia and Wallachia in the Russian Empire, and gives the Sultan to understand that this is done with his entire consent. In the words of the all-powerful Emperor, the Turks will recognize the decree of Destiny, and will resign themselves to submission. Napoleon thus comes to the assistance of the hard-pressed armies of the Czar at a critical moment, and apparently decides the fate of the day.

On the 9 December the Emperor ordered Champagny to send a copy of his address to Caulaincourt, accompanied by the real news, of the Russian defeat, and the statement that this was his reason for speaking of the reunion of the two provinces to Russia: "that the Emperor may thus see that I do not vacillate, and that I even do more than I promise." In communicating these facts to the Czar, the ambassador is to insinuate that the Emperor has made a gift of a province which more than pays all the expenses of the late war: it is for the Emperor Alexander to comprehend, and to appreciate, a conduct so different from his own, and which speaks for itself. Let Alexander seize this opportunity to square himself for once; let him accede with good grace, without delay, to the formal demand for his sister, which can no longer be put off, and will follow immediately. [1]

On the 13 December, two days before the final pronouncement of the divorce, the Emperor called Champagny to the Tuileries, and dictated to him the following letter to Caulaincourt:

"Monsieur l'ambassadeur, I have made known to you the projects of the Emperor by my code letter of November.

[1] *Corresp.*, 16035.

"Since then, the Viceroy has arrived; the Empress, convinced of the grandeur of the circumstances, and the urgent need of the State, has been the first to facilitate the divorce. Everything therefore leads me to think that Friday next a decree of the Senate [*sénatus-consulte*] will pronounce the dissolution of the marriage of the Emperor, by mutual consent. The Empress preserves her rank, her title, and a suitable dower. Being, as you are, upon the spot, Monsieur, the Emperor relies entirely upon you regarding what should be done. You ought then to act upon these three positive underlying ideas:

"(1) That the Emperor prefers, if you have no objection which can change his opinion, the sister of the Emperor of Russia first of all.

"(2) That in this case the moments should be calculated, because, all this being an affair of politics, the Emperor is in haste to secure his great interests by having children.

"(3) That not the slightest importance should be attached to conditions, even to those of religion.

"You have then at this moment all the latitude necessary to conduct yourself with the prudence which the circumstances demand, and to proceed, if there is an opening, without more delay. It will then be very grievous if the response which you make to this letter leaves us in doubt; and, although this affair may fall through, as the result of the information that you have acquired, regarding which the Emperor relies on you, or by the refusal of the assent of the Russian Court, the essential point is that you shall proceed if there is an opportunity. In all your combinations, start from the principle that children are what we want. Therefore, explain yourself, and act in accordance with the present letter, which has been dictated by the Emperor. His Majesty has entire confidence in you, knowing your tact and your devotion to his person . . . The Emperor desires to know positively, before the end of January, what to expect." [1]

Having sent this letter, Napoleon decided, by a declaration

[1] Russian Archives. Thiers is in error in stating (XI, 358) that the letters relating to the marriage were destroyed.

made in the face of all Europe, to reassure Alexander on the subject of Poland. On the 13 December, his Minister of the Interior, M. de Montalivet, read, at the session of the Corps Législatif, his annual report on the condition of the Empire. After recapitulating the events which had occurred since the last session, he gave this official interpretation of the aggrandizement of the Grand Duchy:

"The Duchy of Warsaw is enlarged by a portion of Galicia. It would have been easy for the Emperor to reunite to this State the whole of Galicia, but he did not wish to do anything which could give inquietude to his ally the Emperor of Russia. The Galicia of the ancient partition has remained almost entirely in the power of Austria. His Majesty has never had in view the reëstablishment of Poland." [1]

In the opinion of the Emperor, this final move ought to remove the last hesitations of Alexander, and assure a favorable response to his marriage proposition.

[1] *Moniteur*, 14 December 1809.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### 1809–1810

### ROMANOFF OR HABSBURG?

Napoleon's Two Plans — Rumors About the Saxon Princess — Reason for the King's Visit — The House of Habsburg — Changed Attitude of Austria — Her New Ambassador — M. de Laborde — His Interview with Metternich — The Assurances of M. de Floret — Divorce of Joséphine — Negotiations Delayed by the Czar's Journey — Napoleon Begins Overtures to Austria — He Calls in Joséphine — Her Talk with Mme. de Metternich — Austria Acts — Napoleon Wavers — Alexander's Return — Caulaincourt's Portrait of Anne — The Czar Refers the Question to His Mother — She Consults Catherine — Caulaincourt Reports Progress

IT WAS an invariable habit of Napoleon, as soon as he formed a plan, either in war or in peace, to have always a second combination in reserve, which could be substituted for the first in case of failure. "Je fais toujours mon thème de plusieurs façons," [1] he once said. While pushing his negotiations at Saint Petersburg, therefore, he began discreetly to approach the Court of Vienna.

Although there were several German princesses of ancient lineage, and Catholic religion, the only two who seemed to merit serious consideration were the daughters of the King of Saxony and the Emperor of Austria. Saxony was not one of the Great Powers, but the reigning House was highly considered in Europe, and the King was the most faithful of all the Emperor's German allies. His recent visit to Paris, with his daughter, Marie-Auguste, had naturally led to considerable gossip regarding this princess. But the King of Saxony was also the Grand Duke of Warsaw, and it is hardly probable that Napoleon ever considered seriously an alliance with a second-class Power, and one which would certainly increase the growing suspicions of Russia.

[1] 1 Taine, *Le Régime moderne*, 44.

In reality, Napoleon had invited the King to visit him at Paris for an entirely different reason. In order to keep his new engagements with Alexander regarding Poland, the Emperor was forced to submit to several humiliating concessions, of which one was the loss of the prerogative of bestowing the Polish orders and decorations, which the King of Saxony had dispensed since 1807. Napoleon had therefore decided to see the King and explain these matters to him in person, in order to soften the blow. The visit of the King was accordingly less to prepare a Saxon marriage than to facilitate the Russian alliance.[1]

In case the negotiations with Russia fell through, only Austria seemed worthy of consideration. The House of Habsburg dated back to the eleventh century, and had furnished sovereigns to Austria, Spain, and the Holy Roman Empire, "a long series of ancestors with crowned heads, luminous in the night of the past."[2] Now that the House of Bourbon had disappeared, no other reigning family in Europe could be compared with it in dignity and glory.

Since Wagram, there had seemed to be a change in the attitude of Austria, who had been the greatest enemy, and also the greatest victim of Revolutionary France. Metternich, the former ambassador to Paris, who had succeeded the bellicose Stadion as Minister of Foreign Affairs, had spoken of a durable peace, and even of an alliance. The Emperor Francis had a daughter, the Archduchess Louise, who was eighteen years of age. As a proof of his change of heart, would he give her to the Emperor Napoleon?

During the war the embassies at Paris and Vienna had been closed, and there had not yet been time to send new ambassadors, therefore the usual diplomatic channels for solving this question were not open. Napoleon had not made his appointment for Vienna, but Francis had selected Schwarzenburg to represent him at Paris. The prince had not yet joined his post, but had sent ahead the counsellor of the legation, Chevalier de Floret. In an interview with the latter, on the 21

[1] *Correspondance de Dresde*, 1809–1810. [2] 2 Vandal, 201.

November, Champagny had asked several questions about the Princess Louise, but had not obtained any information which could enlighten the Emperor as to the probable attitude of the Austrian Court.

Most unexpectedly this enlightenment came directly from Vienna, and from a high source. Through his friendship with Bubna, a young Frenchman, named Alexandre de Laborde, had played quite an important minor part during the peace negotiations at Vienna. At the time of the Revolution, Laborde had emigrated, and entered the Austrian service, where he was in the same regiment with Bubna. Subsequently he had rallied to the Empire, and was attached to the general staff. After the conclusion of the peace, he had remained in Vienna in charge of some details connected with the evacuation by the French troops. He was well-fitted for this task on account of his excellent social and political connections.

On the 29 November, Metternich had a curious conversation with Laborde, who hastened to put it in writing, and forward it in the official portfolio to the office of Foreign Affairs at Paris. Through the usual channels, his report therefore quickly came under the eye of the Emperor. The salient features of this paper were as follows:

"Among the means of uniting and harmonizing the two countries, M. de Metternich injected into the conversation the phrase of *family alliance;* and, after circumlocutions and diplomatic détours, he expressed his thought more openly: 'Do you think,' he said, 'that the Emperor has ever really had the desire to divorce the Empress?' I did not expect this question, and, thinking that in this 'alliance' he had reference to a princesse of the French Imperial Family, I replied vaguely so as to draw him out. He returned to the question and spoke of the possibility of a marriage of the Emperor Napoleon with a princesse of the House of Austria. 'This idea,' he said, 'is my own; I have not sounded the intentions of the Emperor regarding it; but beyond the fact that I am almost certain that they will be favorable, such an event would have so fully the approbation of every one who possesses a fortune,

a name, an existence, in this country, I have no doubts on the subject; and, furthermore, I should regard it as a real piece of good fortune for us, and a glory for the period of my ministry.' Having met M. de Metternich again the next day, he renewed the same assurances."

This report is not signed, but it is in the handwriting of Laborde, and the authenticity of the incident is confirmed by an account of the conversation in the *Mémoires* of Metternich, although he pretends that Laborde was the first to speak of the marriage, which is most improbable. That the document passed under the eyes of the Emperor is proved by the note on the margin: "*Renvoyé à M. de Champagny,*" in the scrawl of Napoleon, followed by his heavy *parafe* (initialled signature).[1]

About this time there was also an interesting conversation on the same subject at one of Joséphine's receptions at the Tuileries. Senator Sémonville happened to be thrown with M. de Floret, of the Austrian embassy, whom he had known well for a long time.

"Could it be true," said the senator, "that you would be disposed to give one of your archduchesses?" "Yes," replied Floret.

Thereupon, in answer to further questions from Sémonville, Floret asserted that Schwarzenberg and Metternich were in favor of the marriage; that the Emperor was not opposed to it; and that the Empress would finally yield.[2]

Sémonville entered his carriage, and went directly to the Duc de Bassano, to whom he related the conversation word for word. Maret wrote it out, and sent it to the Emperor the following morning.

In his *Mémoires*, Maret states that this episode was not without its effect upon the Emperor. Napoleon made the remark that, in point of relationship, a son-in-law was much closer than a brother-in-law, and might assure him a durable ascendency over a man so susceptible to family sentiments as

[1] Vienna Archives. [2] Metternich, 313–314.
[2] Ernouf, *Maret, duc de Bassano*, 272.

the Emperor Francis.[1] For the moment, however, he was not disposed to respond to these advances.

On the evening of Friday, the 15 December, the Imperial Family was assembled at the Tuileries to take part in the ceremony of the dissolution of the marriage. The declaration of Joséphine, written in her own clear handwriting, was full of grief and dignity, and moved even the hearts of the Bonapartes. After reading a few words, her voice became choked with sobs, and she handed the paper to Regnault, who finished it. The following morning, the decree annulling the marriage was passed by the Senate. That afternoon Joséphine left the Tuileries for the last time, to establish herself at Malmaison, while Napoleon departed for Trianon, where he proposed to pass the first few days of his brief widowhood.

The first courier to Saint Petersburg was delayed by the formalities of the frontier and the rigors of the Russian winter, so that the despatches did not reach the hands of Caulaincourt until the 14 December. Unfortunately, Alexander had left his capital four days before, for a visit to Moscow, and to his sister Catherine, who was established in the government of Tver. As he was not expected back under two or three weeks, all negotiations had to be put off until the last of December or the first of January.

With Austria, it was much easier to continue the very informal conversations already begun. Her minister was now in Paris, and he could communicate with Vienna and have a reply within two weeks. In a conference which the Emperor had with Maret at Trianon the last of December, he finally gave orders to make some overtures to Schwarzenberg, proceeding always with much dexterity, circumspection, and mystery. "It is important," said Napoleon, "to engage the ambassador without binding me."[2] The *pourparlers*, in the form so specified, were thus actively carried on. The formal notification of the divorce, addressed to the European Govern-

[1] Ernouf 273.

[2] Ernouf, 274.

ments, was drawn up in such a manner as to give the impression that the Emperor, contrary to general opinion, had made no engagements. He did not wish the Court of Vienna to know how deeply he was committed to Russia. In the circular issued by the Foreign Office, it was stated that "the heart of His Majesty was indeed too much afflicted for him to take up such subjects as yet." [1] These sentimental phrases had the practical intent of persuading Austria that the field was still open. The circular, it is hardly necessary to state, was not sent to Saint Petersburg!

Owing to the confidences that he had received at Vienna, Laborde was chosen to take the matter up with the Austrian ambassador. Before the end of December he saw Schwarzenberg several times, found him personally well-disposed, even profoundly interested in the matter; convinced of the great advantages which would accrue to his country, but unable to speak for his Court; skeptic as to the outcome, and looking for a Russian marriage. Laborde revived his hopes and insinuated that it would be well for him "to be prepared for any event." [2] Finally, Napoleon decided to employ some of the persons most closely attached to himself, and the last ones whom one would have expected to see intervene.

On Christmas day, Napoleon invited Joséphine and Hortense to dine with him at Trianon, and the following morning he returned to the Tuileries, where everything recalled the absent one. The morning of the 31 December, he wrote Joséphine: "I have a grand parade to-day, mon amie; I shall see all my Old Guard and more than sixty trains of artillery . . . I am sad not to see thee. If the parade is finished before three o'clock, I will come. If not, to-morrow." In fact, he did not go until the next day, and it was in the course of this New Year's visit that he asked Joséphine to help in the choice of her successor! Strange as it may seem, Joséphine was ready and willing to participate in the selection of the happy rival who was to take her place on the throne of France.

[1] French Foreign Archives.
[2] See Welschinger, 70–81, 149–157; Ernouf, 274.

At heart, Joséphine had always been a royalist, and she wished to see the Empire imitate the legitimate monarchy in its family alliances. The Emperor Francis had won her heart by the magnificent gifts he had sent her at the time of the peace of Campo-Formio in 1797. Through self-interest, in order to assure Eugène's position in Italy; by taste, and aristocratic leanings, she therefore favored the Austrian alliance. She had never met Alexander, who was later to become her warm friend, and had no sympathy with the Russian Court. Eugène and Hortense shared the preferences of their mother. They had always kept up their intimacy with Mme. de Metternich, who had remained at Paris after the departure of her husband.

The result of Napoleon's New Year's call was that Mme. de Metternich was invited, the following day, to visit Malmaison, where she heard "some very extraordinary things." Prince Eugène and Queen Hortense did not hesitate to inform her that they were "Austrians at heart." The Empress, who entered the room later, repeated these assurances, and went even further: she said that she had the Austrian marriage much at heart, and that she was sure it could be brought about. The Emperor, when she saw him the previous day, had said that his choice was not yet made, but she was confident that it would be as soon as he knew that Austria would give him the Archduchess.[1]

Mme. de Metternich, as was expected, immediately reported to her husband at Vienna the words of Joséphine, Eugène, and Hortense, which went far to confirm the information already received from Schwarzenberg. The Court of Vienna, with its long experience in matrimonial alliances, seems to have anticipated, and prepared in advance, for the possibility of a formal demand. Early in January the Austrian ambassador received instructions from Metternich, in case the Emperor of the French should think of the Archduchess Louise, "far from rejecting this idea, to follow it up, and not to refuse any openings which might be made to him."[2] The decision of

[1] 2 Metternich, 314 315.

[2] 2 Metternich 313.

the Ecclesiastical Court of Paris, declaring Napoleon's religious marriage null and void, removed the last remaining scruples of Francis, and about the middle of January the Emperor became practically certain that Austria would welcome his demand.

Although Napoleon had not yet given up his preference for the Russian marriage, from this date there seems to have been a change in his ideas. The more Austria displayed a desire to meet his wishes, the more he regarded seriously the two questions, of the age of the young Grand Duchess, and the difference in religion, to which he had previously paid but little attention. Nevertheless, it is certain that he would have carried out his original plan, and married Anne, if the response from Russia had been favorable.

Alexander returned to his capital on the 26 December, and Caulaincourt immediately took up with him the two negotiations: the marriage, and the treaty regarding Poland. On the 4 January 1810, the treaty was signed by him and Roumiantsof, and ratified by Alexander: to go into effect it only required the ratification of Napoleon.

During the absence of the Czar, the French ambassador had given much time to a delicate and minute inquiry regarding the Grand Duchess Anne, and in a secret despatch to Champagny under date of the 6 January 1810, he thus traces her portrait:

"Your Excellency knows by the Court Almanac that Mademoiselle la Grande-Duchesse Anne does not enter upon her sixteenth year until to-morrow the 7 January: this is correct. She is tall for her age, and more precocious than is usually the case here; for, according to persons who frequent her mother's Court, she has been developed for fully five months . . . She has fine eyes, a sweet face, an air open and agreeable, and, without being very pretty, she has an expression full of kindness. Her character is calm, she is said to be very sweet; her goodness is spoken of more than her mind. In this respect she differs entirely from her sister [Cath-

erine], who is considered imperious and decided. Like all the grandes-duchesses she has been well brought up and educated. She already possesses the bearing and the assurance, necessary in a princess, to hold her court." . . .[1]

Caulaincourt soon had a good opportunity for a private conversation with the Czar. On the evening of the 28 December he dined at the palace. On leaving the table Alexander invited the ambassador to enter his cabinet, where their talk, as usual, became intimate and confidential. The Czar himself brought up the subject of the divorce, and said that he was glad that Napoleon at last was thinking of the future. This gave Caulaincourt the opening he wanted. In accordance with the only instructions he had yet received — the letter of the 22 November — he asked the Czar to tell him in strict confidence, after having thought it over for two days, if he would feel disposed to give his sister, in case a demand came from the Tuileries.

The reply of Alexander was more gracious than satisfactory. He said: "You recall what I told you at Erfurt: an ukase, as well as the last wish of my father, gives to my mother the free and entire disposition of the establishment of her daughters. Her ideas are not always in accord with my wishes or my policy — not even with common-sense. If this matter depended upon me, you should have my word before leaving my cabinet, for, I assure you, the idea pleases me. I will think it over, and will give you a reply, as you desire, but you must allow me at least ten days." [2]

Although he saw his mother in the meantime, it was a week before Alexander talked the matter over with her. To his surprise she did not reject the proposition at once, but asked time for reflection, and to consult Catherine, in whose judgment she placed great reliance.

While awaiting the reply from Tver, Caulaincourt was at a loss to imagine what the answer would be. In 1807, when Catherine herself was in question, she had appeared favorably

[1] Archives of Foreign Affairs, Russia.
[2] Report of Caulaincourt, 28 December 1809.

disposed. Later, the events in Spain had revived her prejudices against Napoleon. Nevertheless, Alexander seemed to think that the reply of his sister would be favorable, and that it would remove the last remaining objections of his mother.

Before closing the despatch-box, containing his last two letters and the Polish treaty, Caulaincourt added two lines, not in cipher: "I have reason to think," he wrote, "that the delay of certain affairs is due only to the causes given." [1]

[1] Foreign Archives, Russia.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

## 1810

## THE REFUSAL OF RUSSIA

Napoleon Undeceived — He Calls an Imperial Council — Uncertainty As to the Date — Details of the Conference — Different Versions — Murat Speaks for Russia — The Weight of Opinion Favors Austria — Cambacérès' Warning Disregarded — Napoleon Non-Committal — Public Opinion — The Second Courier Arrives — Objections of the Empress Dowager — Napoleon Feels Free to Act — He Demands the Archduchess Louise — Schwarzenberg's Dilemma — A Second Council — The News Sent to Russia — The Marriage Contract Signed — Napoleon Arranges the Itinerary — A Sketch of Louise — Russia Finally Refuses — Napoleon Modifies the Polish Treaty

IN READING the despatches of Caulaincourt, which reached Paris about the 25 January, Napoleon received a very painful impression: he was far from taking the optimistic view of his ambassador. Since the last campaign the Emperor had lost much of his confidence in his ally. In the repeated delays, in the references of the matter to his mother and his sister, Napoleon saw an attempt to elude his demand, without absolutely refusing it. From this moment his policy was governed by this thought, so wounding to his pride. But prudence demanded that he should take no action precipitately. In the meantime he resolved to withhold his signature to the Polish treaty.

After Mass, on Sunday the 28 January, Napoleon called a meeting of the principal dignitaries of the Empire, to discuss the respective advantages and disadvantages of a matrimonial alliance with Russia, Austria or Saxony. Thiers, followed by nearly all the historians, places this date a week earlier, before the receipt of the despatches from Russia, but this seems to be incorrect. The despatches of Schwarzenberg furnish contemporary evidence which is more reliable than the memoirs written at a much later date, upon which the French historians have relied. A memorandum, preserved in the National

Archives, dated the first of February, speaks of the sensation caused in Paris society, "*depuis trois jours*," by the council held at the Tuileries, which corresponds with the date of the 28 January. Finally, in a letter under date of the 6 February,[1] Napoleon refers to the meeting held "a few days since." This date is of importance, for it shows that Napoleon did not allow any open discussion of the Austrian marriage until after the receipt of the news from Russia.

To this council were summoned the kings and princes of the Bonaparte and Beauharnais families, the grand officers of the Empire, Cardinal Fesch, the ministers, and the presidents of the Senate and the Corps Législatif. All of these personages, to the number of over twenty, came together in the same salon of the Tuileries where the divorce had been pronounced only six weeks before!

When the dignitaries were all assembled, the Emperor entered, and took his place at the head of the council-table: it was one of the most solemn moments in all the extraordinary vicissitudes of French history. Napoleon, who had risen by sheer force of genius to a position higher than Cæsar or Charlemagne, had called together his most trusted counsellors to aid him in determining a policy by which he hoped to control the future, as he had dominated the past. "Around him are grouped these personages celebrated under different titles, of whom some personify the heroism of war, others the genius of affairs; kings by their sword, statesmen possessors of the traditions of the past: Murat and Eugène, Talleyrand and Fouché, Berthier, Cambacérès, Maret, Champagny, Fontanes — all dissimilar in origin, in mind, in passions, but brought together by the common master, who constitutes their bond and associates their destinies." [2]

Napoleon opened the meeting with a few dignified and well-chosen words. He said in substance: "I can wed a princess of Russia, Austria, or Saxony; of one of the sovereign Houses of Germany, or indeed a Frenchwoman: it only remains for

[1] *Corresp.*, 16210. See also *mémoire* of Pellenc in French Archives.
[2] 2 Vandal, 237.

me to designate the one who will first pass under the Arc de Triomphe to enter Paris" [1] To flatter the national pride, he added that he would prefer to marry a Frenchwoman, but that powerful interests might dictate another choice.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Champagny, Duc de Cadore, who had been in charge of the negotiations, spoke next. He furnished some information regarding the ages and the qualifications of the three princesses who had been most seriously considered: the Grand Duchess Anne, the Archduchess Louise, and the Princesse Auguste of Saxony. After this the question was thrown open for general discussion, and the Emperor invited all to state their views.

Thiers [2] has given us a detailed report of this consultation, but his story rests on the evidence of only one person who was present, the Arch-Chancellor Cambacérès, and other witnesses have given very different versions. It is not easy, therefore, to reconstitute the scene. In this is to be found an example of the difficulties which so frequently confront the writer in his search for the truth of History. Many of those who were present [3] have left memoirs in which they have sketched the scene, but no two of these accounts agree upon the date, the names of those present, or the positions taken. If, as above stated, the date can be fixed with certainty, it is not the same with the advice given by those present. This, however, is not strange, for we find that nearly all the memoirs of the time, mostly written many years after the event, are colored by the changed points of view of the authors after the Restoration. Under these circumstances, it is frankly impossible to give an accurate report of the proceedings.

The idea of espousing a Frenchwoman was not advocated by any one. The arch-treasurer, Lebrun, was the only person to speak in favor of the Saxon princess, and he had one or two supporters. It was around the names of the two great Empires, Russia and Austria, that the debate became most animated. The arch-chancellor, Cambacérès, and King Murat

[1] Helfert, 87.
[2] 11 Thiers, 368–373.
[3] See the memoirs of Talleyrand, Mollien, Bassano, and others.

warmly supported the Grand Duchess Anne, while Talleyrand, Eugène, Mollien, Fesch, Fontanes, Champagny, Maret and Berthier declared for the Archduchess Louise.

With his vivid, soldiery eloquence, Murat led the charge against Austria: it was enough for him that the Beauharnais favored the Habsburg alliance, he threw himself into the opposite camp. There is little doubt that the "beau sabreur" had behind him a strong party in the nation, who saw in the Austrian marriage a backward step — a return to the days of Marie-Antoinette, with all the abuses and privileges of the Ancien Régime.

On the other hand, the partisans of Austria wished to see a repudiation, so far as possible, of the ideas of the Revolution, and a return to the principles of the legitimate monarchy. To assure the peace of the Continent, and fix definitely the future of Italy and of Germany, they desired to end the duel between Austria and France, which for more than a decade had led to all the coalitions which had been formed. Without exception, the ablest advisers of the Emperor advocated this policy.

The question does not seem to have been put to vote, but the weight of opinion was clearly in favor of Austria. The most statesmanlike utterance on the other side was that of Cambacérès. He pointed out the salient fact, to which but little attention appears to have been given, that the nation not selected would inevitably become an enemy. There was little chance of a renewal of hostilities with Austria, four times conquered by France: the future point of danger lay in the great Empire of the North, with its enormous resources and its great latent force of resistance. In the light of after-events, it seems strange that this grave warning made so little impression on the assembly.

The Emperor listened to the debate, for the most part, in silence, giving few signs of approbation or disapproval. Only once did he plainly show his discontent. When Cessar, who was connected with the War Office, became very animated in his attack on Austria, and exclaimed, "Austria is no longer

a Great Power!" Napoleon calmly interrupted with the remark: "It is evident, sir, that you were not at Wagram."[1] At the end, the Emperor thanked and dismissed his advisors without himself expressing any opinion.

As Napoleon had placed no injunction of secrecy, the details of the meeting immediately became known in Paris, and caused a great sensation. The public appeared divided in its sentiments, but the weight of opinion favored the Austrian alliance. The parties the most opposed to the Archduchess were the two extreme factions: on the one hand, the men most deeply compromised by the excesses of the Revolution; on the other, the devoted royalists, "who were indignant at the idea of a marriage which would efface upon the brow of Bonaparte the sign of the usurpation." Outside of these two extreme groups, the Austrian faction had the greatest support.

On the evening of the 5 February, a second courier from Caulaincourt arrived in Paris. Like the first, he brought two despatches, dated the 15 and 21 January, also a note not in cipher. As soon as Champagny read the letter, he saw that nothing was yet decided at Saint Petersburg. The minister spent the night in decoding the two despatches, which contained only a bulletin of the negotiations between the Czar and his mother.

A reply had been received from Catherine, and it was favorable; but still the mother seemed unable to make up her mind. Her principal objection was the tender age of her daughter. She cited the cases of the two older sisters, who both died early, as the result of having been married too young. On the following day, she had not so much to say on the question of age, but raised conscientious scruples "at the idea of marrying her daughter to a divorced prince." She never seemed at a loss for arguments, some of which were very subtile: for example, she stated that the Code Napoléon did not permit a divorced man to marry under two years! In vain Caulaincourt replied that the Code bound everybody in France except its author. Another time she asked if Napoleon

[1] See Helfert, 87; also Beugnot, 2 *Mémoires*, 359.

could have any children, and said she was informed that he had never had any "even with his mistresses," therefore the sole object of the marriage would be lost. Alexander cited these statements to Caulaincourt to show "the thousand difficulties which passed through his mother's head." Alexander himself appeared to be disgusted. He said one day to the ambassador: "If I succeed, I assure you that I shall believe that I have conducted a most difficult negotiation, for there are no reasons, which you have to combat, and to which you can oppose others: there is the mind of a woman, and the most unreasonable of all."

To show that the Empress *mère* had no personal prejudice against Napoleon, as many thought, Caulaincourt quoted the statement which she made to Roumiantsof: "People are mistaken regarding my opinion of the Emperor Napoleon; I am a mother, I should like to have my sons resemble him, not only as a great captain, but as a stateman: no one governs better."

The last despatch from Caulaincourt, bearing the date of the 21 January, was read by the Emperor on the morning of the 6 February. At the time that it left Saint Petersburg, the second delay of ten days had more than elapsed, and there was still no definite decision. To Napoleon, it was evident that the final answer would be a refusal of his demand, and he no longer hesitated: his last scruples were removed, and he felt free to act. He immediately sent a messenger in search of the Austrian ambassador, who was found to be out of the city for the day, hunting in the vicinity of Paris. When the word reached him, during the course of the afternoon, he made haste to return to his hôtel. At six o'clock he received a visit from Prince Eugène. In a few words, the Viceroy informed him that the Emperor was ready to espouse the Archduchess Louise, but he insisted upon one condition — that the contract should be signed within a few hours! Any adjournment would be considered equivalent to a refusal.

"Never had an ambassador been placed in a more cruel position," Eugène has recounted. His Court had instructed

him to refuse no advances, and had given him all power — except to sign a contract. No one had imagined that the demand of Napoleon, if made, would be so brusque. But Schwarzenberg rose to the occasion. After a brief hesitation, he declared himself ready to sign.

Eugène hastened back to the Tuileries to report the good news to the Emperor, who made no effort to conceal his joy and satisfaction. His union with a daughter of the Habsburgs would almost legitimize his title in the eyes of Europe, and would more than counterbalance the effects of his rebuff by the Court of Saint Petersburg.

Without losing a moment, Napoleon called together that very evening at the Tuileries the same council which had met there nine days before. The meeting was held at a late hour, and the Emperor presided as on the previous occasion. In some unknown way, the news had already spread through the legations and the salons of the capital, and the members knew that they were not called together this time for discussion, but to approve an action already taken.

Champagny read in full the four despatches from Caulaincourt, which revealed the attitude of the Russian Court. In the face of these facts, the few partisans of the Grand Duchess were reduced to silence. At the end, Napoleon announced his decision, and dismissed the council.

There now remained the difficult task of breaking the news to Russia, and to this Napoleon devoted most of his time the following day. By his orders, Champagny prepared two despatches, the first antedated, and the second postdated. In the first, the minister dwelt upon the obstacles to the marriage: the youth of Anne, the uncertainty regarding her development, and the religious differences. In the second, the choice of the Archduchess was announced, with plausible explanations.

Notwithstanding the late hour at which the meeting broke up, Champagny received orders to make an appointment with Schwarzenberg to sign the marriage contract at noon the following day. The form used for the marriage of Louis the Sixteenth and Marie-Antoinette, forty years before, was resur-

rected from the files of the Foreign Office, and used as a model for the present occasion. After submitting this paper to the Emperor at his *lever*, and securing his approval, with some modifications in the line of simplicity, the minister was just in time to keep his rendez-vous with the Austrian ambassador.

At the hour agreed upon, Schwarzenberg, with much trepidation, signed the contract, and immediately sent it by special courier to Vienna for the ratification of his master. The document was accompanied by a letter of explanation and excuse, in which the ambassador showed his worry by making a mistake of a month in the date of his communication!

This same day, still the 7 February, so full of events, Napoleon prepared the itinerary for the marriage by procuration at Vienna, and the journey of the new Empress to Paris. He calculated that the contract ought to reach Vienna in a week, and the reply be received at Paris by the end of a fortnight. The Prince de Neuchâtel, designated as ambassador extraordinary, would leave Paris on the 22 February, and reach Vienna by the last of the month. The marriage by procuration would take place the first week in March, and Marie-Louise could be in Paris two weeks later. Without losing any time, the Emperor fixed the amount of her dower, and arranged her household.

By the end of the day, Napoleon had settled all the details, so that the marriage decided upon the previous evening should be an accomplished fact by the end of six weeks. The only thing which he put off until the following day was to demand some information as to the princess of his choice. Fortunately, Comte Otto, the new ambassador to Vienna, had foreseen this demand, and soon after his arrival on the 25 January had sent the following sketch of Louise:[1]

"This princesse, eighteen years of age, is tall and well-formed; she has a noble bearing, an agreeable countenance, much grace, and an expression of sweetness and affability which inspires confidence. She seems to have received a very careful education; she sings, she plays the piano well, and she

[1] Otto to Champagny, Foreign Archives.

piants in oil. I turned the conversation on the arts, and she spoke with much intelligence, and above all with that modesty which embellishes youth."

In reaching the decision to marry the daughter of the Emperor Francis, the clear judgment of Napoleon had not deceived him: at that moment he no longer had any chance of wedding the sister of the Czar. The despatches sent from Paris on the 6 and 7 February crossed on the way to Russia the reply of the Czar, and that reply was a refusal.

On the 4 February, Alexander informed Caulaincourt that his mother absolutely refused to consent to the marriage of Anne under two years. The age of her daughter was "the sole obstacle which the Empress *mère* found to the marriage." Alexander, in communicating this decision to Caulaincourt, begged him to let the matter drop. "In view of the age of my sister, and the obstinate spirit of my mother," he said, . . . "I think that it would be a humiliation for the Emperor and for myself, at this moment, to ask my mother again to change her decision." [1]

On this same February day, when so many important matters claimed his attention, Napoleon took up the Polish treaty, and decided that he would not approve it, unless modified in several points. Thiers,[2] and other historians, have claimed that the Czar would have accorded the hand of his sister if Napoleon had executed the treaty. As the above narrative plainly shows, this is incorrect; but the converse is true: Napoleon would probably have signed the treaty if his demand for the Grand Duchess had been favorably received. While Alexander kept the two matters entirely distinct, Napoleon associated them in his mind.

When Napoleon examined the treaty, his eye fell at once on the clause in the first article: "Poland shall never be reëstablished." He was offended by this unprecedented formula,

[1] In 1816, Anne married the Prince of Orange, afterwards William II, King of the Netherlands, who was grandfather of the present queen, Wilhelmina.

[2] 11 Thiers, 359–361, 374; Helfert, 86.

and was unwilling to bind himself to this extent. Nevertheless, he did not wish to send a refusal pure and simple, which, coming directly after the news of the Austrian marriage, might cause an immediate rupture of the alliance. In place of this phrase, he instructed Champagny to insert the following: "The Emperor Napoleon pledges himself never to give any succor or assistance to any Power or to any internal uprising of any nature whatsoever which tends to reëstablish the Kingdom of Poland." [1] The other articles were redrafted on the same basis, and the modified treaty was returned to Russia on the 10 February.

[1] *Corresp.*, 16178.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### 1809–1810

## THE ARCHDUCHESS LOUISE

The House of Habsburg — Its Matrimonial Alliances — The Emperor Francis the First — His Disastrous Wars with France — His Character — His Numerous Marriages — His Devotion to His Wives — The Archduchess Louise — Her Portrait — Her Childhood — Her Governess — Her Education — Early Hatred of the French — Devotion to Her Father — His Third Marriage — Sketch of Béatrice — Her Antipathy for the French — She Urges a War of Revenge — False Reports of Victory — Joy of Louise — Flight of the Imperial Family — Letters of Louise — Her Comments on the Divorce of Napoleon — She Pities His New Wife — Resigned to Sacrifice Herself if Necessary

OF ALL the States on the Continent, the two which had felt least the effects of the French Revolution were Austria and Russia. Throughout Italy, in Spain and Portugal, and along the Rhine, the ancient thrones had been everywhere overthrown. But at Vienna, for eighteen generations, since Rudolph, in 1273, the Imperial dignity had been handed down almost without a break in the House of Habsburg.

At the close of the preceding century, the Bourbons had established their dynasty almost everywhere in Southern Europe. Princes of that family reigned at Versailles, at Madrid, at Naples, and at Parma. A family pact, for their mutual benefit, united all these different thrones; but Austria had secured a powerful influence in these capitals by her family alliances. Daughters of the House of Habsburg were enthroned at Versailles, Naples and Parma.

If the ruling family of Austria had seemed on the point of extinction after Leopold the First, it had been regenerated for a moment by the blood of Lorraine. By her marriage with Duke Francis, Maria Theresa had sixteen children; her son Leopold, the same number, and her grandson, Francis, thirteen. Few of these children, however, were vigorous and healthy: many died young. The constitutional taints came

mainly from the numerous marriages with the House of Bourbon.

On the first of March 1792, the reigning monarch, Francis, had mounted the throne upon the death of his father, Leopold. He was the third of his name in Lorraine, the second in Germany, and the first in Austria. Since 1796, he had attacked France four separate times, and on each occasion had been ignominiously vanquished. After each defeat, he had lost a part of his Empire: at Campo-Formio, he had given up Lombardy, the Low Countries, and the left bank of the Rhine; at Lunéville, Tuscany and the balance of Italy; at Presburg, the Venetian States, the Tyrol, and the dignity of Holy Roman Emperor; at Vienna, Galicia, Dalmatia, the city of Trieste, and other small parcels. He had been forced to flee from his capital in 1797, in 1805, in 1809; and on the last two occasions he had seen Napoleon established as master in his palaces; his pride had been humiliated, and his choicest possessions torn from him. Although neither infirm nor aged, being indeed a contemporary of Napoleon, he had considered it beneath his dignity to command his armies in person. Having used up the ablest generals on his staff: Beaulieu, Wurmser, Alvinzy, Mélas, and Mack, in the last campaign he had relied on his brothers: Ferdinand, Charles, and John.

Vienna was a very hotbed of anti-French sentiment. It was the place of exile on the Continent of all the adherents of the monarchs and princes driven from their ancestral estates, of all the enemies of France and her Emperor. Although much under the influence of these foes of the Revolution, Francis was a worthy man, of limited intelligence, but one who inspired and merited confidence. In an age of lax morals, his private life was irreproachable. He lived apart with his wife and children, his brothers and nephews. He was a most uxorious husband, and wished to have his wife constantly by his side. He was most exacting in his demands: "Non qu'il soit méchant, mais il n'a point de maîtresses et il lui en faudrait plusieurs." [1] His entire time was devoted to the

[1] Masson, *L'impératrice Marie-Louise*, 9.

EMPEROR FRANCIS I

minor details of his existence: the conferring of titles and favors, audiences and military reviews. Disliking as much as Alexander the constraints of etiquette, he shared with his family their little pleasures and amusements. He was delighted with the marks of affectionate respect which always greeted his appearances in public. He regarded his subjects like a father his family. It was only on rare and solemn occasions that he showed himself in the apparel of State: he disliked and dreaded these occasions and always seemed timid and embarrassed.

He was such a good husband, so strictly faithful, that "il en tue ses femmes." [1] He was twenty years of age when he married for the first time, and his wife, Elizabeth of Würtemberg, lived only two years. Six months after her death he espoused his cousin Marie-Thérèse, daughter of Ferdinand the Fourth, of Naples, and Marie-Caroline, who was a sister of Marie-Antoinette. By her he had thirteen children in less than seventeen years. She died in April 1807, at the birth of her last child, and nine months later was replaced by the Princess Marie-Louise-Béatrice, who was another cousin, daughter of the Archduke Ferdinand. She exercised great influence over her husband from the first. She detested the French with a hatred which she had inherited from her father. This third wife of the Emperor Francis was the only one whom Napoleon knew.

Of the thirteen children born to Marie-Thérèse, nine survived their mother. The eldest, Marie-Louise, was eighteen years of age on the 12 December 1809. She was a nice young girl, blonde, fresh, with a rose and white skin, somewhat marked by the smallpox. She had a mass of blond hair; a broad, low forehead; prominent light blue eyes, widely separated; her nose, flat at the base, heavy and sensual at the end, gave her something of a Kalmuck look. She had the heavy lower lip, characteristic of the House of Austria, and white teeth, separated and somewhat projecting. She was above the average height, five feet six inches, English measure,

[1] Masson, 11.

with rather heavy, sloping shoulders, a fine but large bust, slender limbs, and very small hands and feet. The feature which most struck the observer was the heavy lip of Charles-Quint, that lip out-of-proportion, heavy and pendant, which in the *Charles II* of Vélasquez imprints the ineffaceable mark of melancholy idiocy. She was formed, in part, like a nymph of Rubens, in part, like an undeveloped child. She was ungraceful, timid, and possessed no powers of attraction. "The new Empress," said Metternich, "will please Paris, and ought to please it, by her goodness, and her great sweetness and simplicity. Plain, rather than pretty, she has a very fine figure, and when she is well dressed she will be all right." But, did this consummate man of the world fully realize what was likely "to please Paris," and especially as a successor to the fascinating Joséphine?

The early years of Marie-Louise possess but little interest, and can be quickly passed over. As the eldest child, at the age of two, she was given a household of her own, of which the head was a governess, who had full authority over her life. This custodian was changed in 1794, and again five years later, when the Comtesse de Colloredo was appointed. She was French by birth, of a provincial family of the minor noblesse, and had married this same year of 1799 Comte de Colloredo, who occupied a high place at Court and was the real master of the Emperor and of Austria. She performed so well the task assigned her that she continued to be the most intimate friend and confidente of the Archduchess.

Under the supervision of her governess, Louise received an excellent education, especially in languages. Besides her native tongue, she spoke French, Italian, Spanish and English. She took lessons on the piano and the harp, and had a complete course in ancient and modern history.

Her life was passed at the city palace in Vienna, or at the suburban château of Schönbrunn. During the period of her education, she never was allowed to appear on any formal occasion, not even at the fêtes of the family. Of all the persons of her family, it was her father whom she loved and

admired the most. How could she help detesting the French, who had killed her great-aunt, Marie-Antoinette, deprived her grandmother, Marie-Caroline, of her throne, and stolen Italy and the Netherlands from her House? She was only a child of six when the Imperial family fled for the first time from their capital at the approach of the dreaded Bonaparte, but she was ten when her grandmother, driven from her kingdom after Marengo, came for a long visit to Vienna. Five years roll by, and again the family are chased from their capital by the hated "Corsican." This time, the disaster came closer home to her, for Colleredo was deprived of his charges, and exiled to his estates, for having advocated the war, and his wife was forced to follow him. Thus, by the same blow, Louise lost her "maman," and the daughter Victoire, her dearest friend.

From that time she was under the personal direction of her mother, until the Empress gave her a regular establishment in March 1807. She found her mother a much harder taskmaster than her dear "maman." She was not even allowed to write her old friends without showing her letters to her mother. The little hypocrite writes in one of her letters: "Maman [this time it is the Empress] has the kindness to guide and counsel me, and nothing is dearer to me than to follow the advice of so adorable a mother." [1]

After her mother's death, she was thrown more into the company of her father, and went with him on some of his trips to the provinces, and to the baths in Baden. Soon there were rumors of a new marriage of the Emperor. His third wife, Béatrice, born the 14 December 1787, was only four years older than her step-daughter. Her father, the Archduke Ferdinand, was one of the younger children of Maria Theresa. Until 1796, when he was expelled by Bonaparte, he had governed Milan for the Emperor, and reigned over two of the smaller States in Italy. He had then taken up his residence in Venice, only to be exiled again after the Peace of Presburg in 1805. It is not strange, therefore, that he and his daughter

[1] Quoted by Masson, 23.

hated France and her Emperor. Nor is this all, for two other daughters had also been dispossessed by the French: the Queen of Sardinia, and the dowager of the Elector Palatinate of the Rhine.

After her marriage on the 8 January 1808, the new Empress took every means to gain the affections of Louise, and soon the "dear cousin" became my "chère maman." Béatrice was small, pretty, intelligent, and very adroit; but also very delicate. Although twenty years younger than her husband, she professed the most ardent love for him, and the Emperor was soon completely under her influence. This ascendancy she used for the purpose that she had most at heart: to bring about a war of revenge against France. The disaster of Baylen, the first blow to the prestige of Napoleon, revived the courage and the hopes of Austria. No one believed that the Emperor would submit to this check; and if he withdrew his forces from Germany, to enter Spain at the head of the Grand Army, the field would be open. While the Archduke Charles was completing the formation of his army, Béatrice, puny, ill, burning with passion, breathed the hatred of France and the hope of early victories.

On the 9 March 1809, the whole Imperial family was present at the ceremony of blessing the standards at Vienna, and a month later the army crossed the frontier. During the first week of the campaign, while Napoleon once more crushed the power of Austria, in one of the most brilliant operations of his career, Vienna was full of reports of glorious victories. Eckmühl was an "Austrian triumph," and Louise wrote her father: "We have learned with joy that Napoleon was present at the great battle he has lost. May he also lose his head! Many predictions are made here about his coming end . . . They say that he is going to die this year . . . I do not attach much importance to all these predictions, but how happy I should be to see them come true!" [1]

But in place of the expected victories, the Court was forced to flee once more. On the 5 May, Napoleon was at Enns, and

[1] Masson, 29.

the Empress left Vienna, accompanied only by her step-daughter. Her fragile nerves broken by the agony of defeat, she suffered terribly during the journey to Bude, over the broken roads, under a pouring rain. But even there, they could not remain in safety, for the middle of June news was received that the Archduke John had been defeated at Raab, and that Eugène was only twelve hours' march away. They fled once more, to Erlau, where Louise had only one chamber, furnished with "a table, a bed, two torn sofas, and four chairs, all full of very nasty bedbugs." The Empress was still very ill, and Louise writes: "You can imagine that neither the health of Mama, nor my own, is improved by this continual agony."

All of her letters are full of hatred for Napoleon. When news came of the congress to arrange the terms of peace, she wrote: "I only hope that he will be far from the place where Mama and I are staying, for I dread a visit, and I assure you that, to see this person, would be to me a trial worse than martyrdom."

A little later, the whole family was reunited at Bude, where life once more became gay, after all the trials they had endured. There were small balls, concerts, and, for Louise, lessons in painting.

The 10 January 1810, Louise was still at Bude, where she was detained by the illness of her mother. At this time she wrote to her friend Victoire: "They talk of the separation of Napoleon from his wife: I think that they even speak of me as the one to take her place, but in that they are mistaken, for Napoleon is too much in fear of a refusal, and too anxious to injure us to make such a demand; besides, Papa is too kind to constrain me in a matter of such importance." The same day she also writes her former governess: "Bude is like Vienna, and they talk only of the divorce of Napoleon. I let every one talk, and do not worry at all. I only pity the poor princess he chooses, for I am sure that I will not become the victim of politics." Two weeks later she writes again to her old friend: "Since the divorce of Napoleon, I open every gazette of Frankfort with the idea of finding in it the nomination of the new

wife, and I admit that this delay gives me involuntary uneasiness. I place my fate in the hands of divine Providence, which alone knows what can make us happy. But, if misfortune demands it, I am ready to sacrifice my personal happiness for the good of the State, persuaded that one only finds true felicity in the accomplishment of one's duty, even to the prejudice of one's inclinations. I do not want to think any more about it, but my mind is made up, although it will be a double and very painful sacrifice. Pray that it may not be." [1]

It was probably this same day that her father informed her that, in case of a demand, she must be prepared for the marriage. In vain she implored him, and appealed to her stepmother for support. The Emperor invoked the supreme interests of his Monarchy, and the Archduchess bowed her head: she was a true daughter of Austria!

[1] Quoted 2 Fournier, 115.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### 1810

## THE MARRIAGE AT VIENNA

The Contract Sent to Vienna — Napoleon's Satisfaction — Francis Leaves the Decision to Louise — Her Reluctant Consent — Otto's Misleading Despatches — The Alliance Popular — Napoleon Arranges for the Marriage — His Autograph Letter to Francis — The Marriage Formally Announced — Difficulties in Annulling Napoleon's Religious Marriage — Scruples of the Archbishop of Vienna — His Objections Overcome by a False Affidavit — Berthier Sent as Ambassador Extraordinary — He Makes the Formal Demand — The Marriage Contract — The Ceremony — Banquet at the Palace — Honors Accorded Berthier — The City Illuminated

THE contract of marriage, signed on the 7 February 1810 by the Duc de Cadore, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Prince de Schwarzenberg, the Austrian Ambassador, was immediately forwarded to Vienna by a special courier. From Schwarzenberg's letter to Metternich, sent at the same time, it is evident that Napoleon had succeeded in concealing from him the failure of the negotiations with Russia. He writes: "When one knows the character of the Emperor Napoleon, it does not seem doubtful that, if I had hesitated on my side, he would have abandoned this project to look for another."

The following day the ambassador sent his secretary, Floret, to Vienna, with another letter to Metterich, in which he expresses the same conviction. "If I had insisted on not signing," he wrote, "Napoleon would have broken away, to conclude either with Russia or Saxony . . . I pity the princess, it is true, but she must not forget, nevertheless, that it is very fine to assure peace to such good people, and to become the guarantor of tranquillity and general repose . . . Bring this matter to a noble end, and you will have rendered an immense service to the country."

At the reception of the diplomatic corps at the Tuileries the

same day, the Emperor said to Schwarzenberg, "Monsieur l'ambassadeur, you have worked very hard these last days, and I think that you have accomplished a fine task." Kourakine, the Russian ambassador, was so upset that he did not attend the reception, under plea of illness. At the Court of the Tuileries there was general satisfaction: Napoleon felt that he had never gained a greater victory.

The first courier reached Vienna on the 14 February. At the Austrian capital, every one was still ignorant of the proposed marriage except the Emperor, the Empress, the Archduchess, and Metternich. In his *Mémoires*, the minister tells us that Marie-Louise gave her consent with resignation, rather than joy. The Emperor ordered him to go and see the Archduchess, and to return to report what she said. "I do not wish myself to inform her of the demand of the Emperor of the French," he said, " in order not to have the appearance of influencing her decision."

When Metternich saw the Archduchess, her first question was as to the wishes of her father. He replied that the Emperor did not desire her to consider his wishes: she must decide for herself. "I only wish what my duty commands," said Louise. "When the interests of the Empire are at stake, I must consult them, and not my desires. Pray my father to obey only his duties as sovereign, and not to subordinate them to my personal interest."

On hearing the report of this interview, Francis said: "What you tell me does not surprise me: I know my daughter too well not to have expected such a response. I have employed the time that you spent with her to make up my mind. My consent to this marriage will assure to the Monarchy several years of political peace, that I can consecrate to healing its wounds. I am bound to consider the happiness of my people, therefore I cannot hesitate."

These words show plainly that the pretended reconciliation of the Austrian Court was not sincere, and the despatches of the French ambassador, Comte Otto, were most misleading. Under date of the 16 February, he wrote the Minister of

Foreign Affairs, the Duc de Cadore:[1] "Everybody thinks that this alliance will assure for a long time the tranquillity of Europe; that it will force England to make peace; that it will give the Emperor all the leisure necessary to organize, according to his high conceptions, the vast Empire which he has created . . . The news of the conclusion of this marriage will be received with cries of joy throughout the entire extent of the Austrian Monarchy."

Writing to Schwarzenberg a few days later, Metternich speaks of the general sensation produced by the news of the marriage. The secret had been kept so well that the public only heard of it the day of Floret's arrival. In a letter to his wife, at the same time, the minister says that it would be difficult to form an idea of the great popularity of the alliance. "If I were the saviour of the world," he goes on, "I could receive neither more congratulations nor more sincere homages upon the part which all are sure that I must have taken. In the promotions which will take place, I shall have the Toison d'or."

While the Court of Austria was making the arrangements for the ceremonies at Vienna, Napoleon was searching the French archives for the details of the etiquette observed at the marriages of the kings, from Louis the Fourteenth to Louis the Sixteenth. At the same time he consulted the old courtiers of the last days of the Ancien Régime, and in particular M. de Dreux-Brézé, who was the Master of Ceremonies at Versailles just before the Revolution. In pomp and majesty, the Emperor wished the ceremonies to be superior to those at the time of the marriage of Marie-Antoinette.

Although it was a rule that all letters exchanged between sovereigns must be autograph, the fact that Napoleon could not write legibly had led to the tacit understanding that his letters should be written by a secretary. However, under the present extraordinary circumstances, the Emperor wished to send a letter to his future father-in-law in his own hand-

[1] All the despatches from Vienna cited in this chapter have been published by Baron de Saint-Amand in his work: *Les beaux jours de Marie-Louise*, 113–158.

writing. Having taken a great deal of pains, he finally produced an epistle which was fairly readable. Then he told his secretary, Méneval, to go over it and rectify the badly formed words in such a manner that the corrections should not be too apparent!

On the 24 February, the marriage was formally announced at Vienna in the *Gazette*. The news was well received in society, and especially in the world of affairs. Comte Otto writes: "The Empress shows herself extremely favorable to this marriage." In the same despatch he also states: "The good humor of the Viennese increases every day, especially in the world of affairs . . . It is above all on the Bourse that public opinion has pronounced itself in an astonishing manner. In less than two hours, there was an advance of thirty per cent. Confidence is reëstablished everywhere: even the price of foodstuffs has fallen." The ambassador was so overcome with joy that he saw everything in a rosy light!

After the marriage was officially announced, there occurred a disagreeable incident which threatened to postpone, or prevent it entirely. This unexpected difficulty was regarding the annulment of the religious marriage of Napoleon. Even at Paris, the matter had not been arranged as easily as the Emperor had expected. Under similar circumstances, where it was a question of the divorce of a sovereign, recourse had always been had to the Pope. The marriage of Louis the Twelfth had been dissolved by the Supreme Pontiff, as had also that of Henry the Fourth. On the present occasion, Napoleon knew that it was hopeless for him to apply to Pius the Seventh. The Pope had been dispossessed of his States, and was now the prisoner of the Emperor. Furthermore, as the result of Joséphine's confession to him at Fontainebleau in November 1804, the Holy Father himself had insisted upon the religious marriage of Napoleon and Joséphine, which was performed in the chapel of the Tuileries, by Cardinal Fesch, on the very eve of the Coronation.

At this time, there was in existence at Paris an ecclesiastical board, composed of Cardinal Fesch, Cardinal Maury, and

six prominent bishops. The Emperor referred the matter to this body, and they decided on the second of January 1810 that the Ecclesiastical Court of Paris had jurisdiction to dissolve the religious marriage.

The request for the annulment of the marriage was accordingly presented to this Court by the arch-chancellor, Cambacérès, on three grounds: First, that the ceremony had not been performed by the priest of the parish, as required by the canonical laws; Second, that no witnesses were present; and Third, that Napoleon had been constrained to give his consent! This last objection was one which was usually applicable only to minors or persons incompetent mentally.

The first two points were obviously of little weight, as the ceremony had been performed under a special dispensation granted by the Pope himself. The only valid ground for dissolving the marriage, therefore, was that the consent of Napoleon had been forced, on the eve of the Coronation, by the refusal of the Supreme Pontiff to take part in the ceremony unless the relations of Napoleon and Joséphine, which were plain concubinage in the eyes of the Church, were regulated by a religious marriage.

On this subject a high authority has said: "Entirely aside from the religious sentiment of the sanctity of marriage, it is difficult to comprehend how such a man should have consented, to represent himself as having wished, on the eve of this grand ceremony of the Coronation, to deceive at the same time his uncle, who married him, his wife, whom he appeared to associate joyfully with his glory, and the venerable Pontiff, who, in spite of his age and his infirmities, had come from so far to give him the benediction of God." [1]

But the Ecclesiastical Court was not deterred by any such scruples: it pronounced the marriage null and void, principally on the ground of the non-consent of Napoleon. The decision was transmitted to Comte Otto at Vienna, who announced it to the Emperor Francis, but did not show him the document itself, which he immediately returned to Paris.

[1] Haussonville, *L'Église romaine et le premier Empire.*

All seemed arranged: Francis expressed himself as satisfied, and the marriage contract was ratified. Suddenly, difficulties appeared: the religious scruples of the Archbishop of Vienna were aroused, and he declined to perform the marriage ceremony, as arranged. This prelate, who had much more respect for the Pope than for the Emperor of the French, demanded to see the original copy of the decree.

Never had negotiations of such high importance been troubled by a more singular incident. The alarm of the French ambassador is shown in a long despatch which he sent to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the last day of February. He was so much upset that he also wrote the Prince de Neuchâtel, the ambassador extraordinary of Napoleon, to defer his arrival at Vienna by a few days.

After several days of painful uncertainty, the scruples of the prelate were removed by a declaration signed by Comte Otto, a copy of which he sent to Paris on the 3 March. He formally affirmed over his signature, as ambassador, that he had read the original decree of the Ecclesiastical Court of Paris, and that, "in conformity with the Catholic Ecclesiastical Laws established in the French Empire, the said marriage had been declared entirely null, because, at the time of the conclusion of this marriage, the most essential formalities required by the laws of the Church had been neglected." He further attested that, "under the civil laws in force at the time of this marriage, every conjugal union was based on the principle that it could be dissolved at the will of the contracting parties."

In the letter which accompanied this remarkable affidavit, Otto practically confessed that he was convinced that the Archbishop would not have consented to officiate if he had known upon what flimsy grounds the decree was granted! "Finally," he concludes, "this means has succeeded, and the delay in the arrival of Mgr. le Prince de Neuchâtel prevents the public from even suspecting the existence of this discussion which has given us so much anxiety."

At Vienna, the arrival of the French ambassador extraor-

dinary was anxiously expected. For this position, Napoleon had selected his chief-of-staff, Marshal Berthier, sovereign prince of Neuchâtel, vice-constable, and grand-huntsman of the Empire. On the 6 March he finally reached Vienna. It was certainly an unfortunate augury for the future that he entered the capital over a temporary bridge built across the ruins of the former city walls, which had been blown up when the French army left Vienna at the conclusion of peace. He was magnificently installed at the Chancellery of the Empire, where he had the same service as the Emperor himself.

The following day was Ash Wednesday, and there were only some informal receptions and a military dinner given by the Archduke Charles. The next evening there was a solemn audience at the palace, with the formal demand for the Archduchess, to which the Emperor briefly replied: "I accord the hand of my daughter to the Emperor of the French." Then Marie-Louise appeared, and Berthier presented to her a letter from Napoleon, and a medallion portrait surrounded with twelve enormous diamonds. To his address, the Archduchess replied: "With the permission of my father, I give my consent to my union with the Emperor Napoleon."

On the ninth, the final marriage contract was executed by Berthier and Metternich, the one signed at Paris having been only preliminary. The terms, based upon the contract of Marie-Antoinette, were: Dot of five hundred thousand francs, the same sum in jewelry given by her father, balanced by six hundred thousand to be given by Napoleon; dowery of five hundred thousand; annual allowance appropriate to her high rank; renunciation of her right of succession in the Austrian dominions.

Finally, the marriage was celebrated on the 11 March, which was a Sunday, the only day on which marriages are allowed during Lent. Through streets lined with soldiers, the procession moved in great pomp to the Church of the Augustins. At the door of the church, the cortège was met by the Archbishop, who presented the Holy Water. He then returned to the altar, while the Imperial family took their places in the

choir. The Archduke Charles, representing the Emperor Napoleon, and Marie-Louise then knelt on the prie-Dieu before the high altar. The Archbishop having blessed the marriage rings, presented to him in a cup, Charles and Louise advanced to the altar, where the ceremony was performed in German, according to the Viennese rites. After the exchange of the nuptial rings, Louise took back the one intended for Napoleon, in order to present it to him. Then the *Te Deum* was chanted. Salvos of artillery and the ringing of all the church bells in the city announced to the people that the ceremony was over. After the benediction, the procession returned by the same route to the palace.

Following the reception at the Burg, there was a large banquet. At the table, the new Empress of the French was seated in the centre, with the Emperor Francis at her right, and the Empress at her left. Then followed, on the two sides, the seven archdukes and the Prince de Neuchâtel.

According to the etiquette of the Court of Vienna, ambassadors were only invited to the table of the sovereign on very rare occasions, and then they left when the dessert was served, to mingle with the crowd of seigneurs in the banquet hall. But on this occasion, Berthier, in his capacity of sovereign prince of Neuchâtel, remained until the end of the dinner.

That evening, all the theatres gave free performances. The Emperor and Empress, with the bride, drove around the city in an open carriage, and were cheered by the good people of Vienna, who crowded the streets. The city was brilliantly illuminated, but a high wind soon extinguished nearly all the lights.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### 1810

## THE JOURNEY TO FRANCE

Francis Assures Napoleon of His Friendship — Louise Leaves Vienna — The Ceremony of the *Remise* — Queen Caroline Heads the French Mission — Bausset's Portrait of Marie-Louise — The Empress Changes Her Apparel — The Austrians Not Pleased with Their Gifts — Louise's Letter to Her Father — Dismissal of Her Companion — Unfavorable Impression at Vienna — Popular Disturbances — Comments of Francis — The Empress Reaches Strasbourg — Napoleon at Compiègne — Elaborate Plans for the Meeting — Napoleon Upsets the Arrangements — His First Encounter with Louise — The Arrival at Compiègne — "Their Majesties Have Retired!"

AFTER so much excitement, Monday, the 12 March, was passed by Louise quietly with her family. The Emperor Francis seized this occasion to write a first letter to his new son-in-law, and despatch it by his chamberlain, Comte de Clary. At the end, he says: "Comte de Metternich, who follows Comte de Clary in a few days, will be charged to express verbally to Your Imperial Majesty the attachment which I have vowed to a prince who, since yesterday, is one of the most precious members of my family. At this moment, I do no more than to pray him to receive the assurance of my esteem and of my unalterable friendship."

During the same day, Berthier left Vienna for Braunau, on the Bavarian frontier, where he was to await the arrival of Marie-Louise, and escort her to France.

On Tuesday morning, the Empress Marie-Louise left Vienna at an early hour, in an eight-horse carriage, accompanied by the Comtesse de Lazansky, grand-mistress of her household. There were ten six-horse carriages, filled with the gentlemen and ladies of her suite, and the escort comprised several squadrons of cavalry. The Emperor had set out an hour earlier for Linz, where he was to embrace his daughter for the last time.

The journey was one continual ovation: in all the cities and

towns through which she passed, the Empress received the homage of the authorities. On Friday morning she reached Altheim, on the border of Bavaria, which, as a member of the Confederation of the Rhine, was considered French territory. Here the ceremony of the *remise* was to take place: Louise was to be given up to the French mission who were to conduct her to Compiègne.

The formalities were all copied from those observed forty years before on the occasion of the marriage of Marie-Antoinette to the Dauphin of France. On the frontier line, there had been constructed three connecting pavilions, of which the first was considered Austrian territory, the third, French, and the one between, neutral ground. Three French regiments, one of cavalry and two of infantry, in gala uniforms, were waiting, to form the escort. The commissioner to receive the Empress was Marshal Berthier, who was accompanied by his secretary, Comte de Laborde. For the head of the French mission, Napoleon had selected his sister Caroline — a very remarkable choice, when we consider that she was occupying the throne of Naples, from which Louise's grandmother Caroline had been driven by the French. The other members of the mission were: the Duchesse de Montebello, widow of Marshal Lannes, and several other ladies of the palace; as well as about a dozen chamberlains and prefects of the palace.

At one o'clock, the French mission assembled in their pavilion, the men in full dress and the women in court gowns. A little later, Marie-Louise arrived: she was conducted to the middle room, and seated on the throne prepared for her. The Austrian commissioner and his secretary placed themselves at the table, and the other members of the mission were grouped around the room.

In the meantime the French mission were anxiously waiting, in the adjoining room, for a sight of their new sovereign. In his *Mémoires*, M. de Bausset confesses that he had brought a gimlet, with which he bored several holes through the partition: the ladies and gentlemen of the party were thus enabled to get a preliminary view of the features of the Empress.

The prefect goes into raptures over the beauty of Marie-Louise: "She was standing upon her throne," he writes. "Her tall figure was perfect. Her hair was blond and admirable. Her blue eyes announced all the candor and all the innocence of her soul. Her face beamed with freshness and goodness. She wore a robe of golden brocade, with large flowers of natural color woven in the silk, which was so heavy it must have fatigued her greatly. She had suspended at her neck the protrait of Napoleon, enriched with sixteen magnificent solitaires, which, altogether, had cost half a million francs."

The French mission were then invited to enter, and the ceremony of the *remise* took place. The acts were signed and sealed; the two secretaries counted the dot, five hundred thousand francs in new golden ducats, and verified the inventory of the jewels, for which a receipt was given. Meanwhile, the members of the Austrian party filed before the Empress, and kissed her hand. "Her eyes were wet with tears, and her emotion won the hearts of all," writes M. de Bausset.

The Empress then took the hand of the Prince de Neuchâtel, and advanced to the rear of the room, where the French party was grouped. The members of the mission were then presented to her by name. Finally, Caroline made her appearance and embraced her new sister-in-law. After a few moments of conversation, they entered a carriage, with eight white horses, and proceeded to Braunau, followed by the members of the two missions, in six-horse carriages, and escorted by the French troops. Through the illuminated streets they reached the lodging which had been prepared by piercing the walls of several houses. In one of the rooms the trousseau de voyage was ready, and Marie-Louise, delivered over to her dame d'Atours and the femmes de chambre, was shortly dressed from head to foot, from coiffure to shoes, à la Française. She then received the oaths of her household, and, at six-thirty, dined with Caroline and Mme. Lazansky. In another room, Prince de Neuchâtel and the Duchesse de Montebello

presided over a banquet of seventy couverts given to the Austrian and French missions; but neither the food nor the wines served to remove the constraint and create a feeling of good-fellowship. "Everything was in contrast: the toilettes, the fashions, the décolletage, the coiffures, the manner even of carrying themselves and putting on airs. Of what account were the names? These people, men and women, had they not rallied to the Empire, therefore to the Revolution — were they not French?" [1]

At the same time the two French generals gave to the Austrian officers a dinner, which was marked by the mutual courtesy of the guests. As Ségur said: "The women showed an ill-will, which their husbands, tired of war, did not display."

Berthier had received his present before leaving Vienna: a portrait médaillon of the Emperor, set in diamonds, and suspended from the order of the Toison d'or. The gifts distributed to the other members of the French mission at Braunau were on a scale of equal magnificence. In comparison, the presents sent by the Emperor Napoleon were much more ordinary, and Berthier was obliged to borrow emeralds and diamonds of the value of over thirty thousand francs from the Duchesses de Montebello and de Bassano in order to satisfy the expectations of the Austrian ladies. This produced a bad effect, and added to the ill-feeling.

That evening, before retiring, as tired as she was, after so fatiguing a day, Marie-Louise wished for the last time to write her father freely. The Austrian commissioner, to whom she confided the letter, was leaving the next morning for Vienna, and she felt that this was her last chance to express her feelings, without the danger of her words being reported to Napoleon by the secret police. This letter, so touching in its simplicity, is worth quoting at length: [2]

Dear Father, pardon me for not having written you yesterday, as it was my duty to do; I was prevented by the journey, which was long and very tiresome. I am glad to seize the occasion [of

[1] Masson, 83.

[2] Masson, 85.

the departure] of Prince de Trautmannsdorff, to assure you of my constant thoughts of you. God has given me the strength to bear the cruel emotion of this separation from all my family. In Him I have placed my reliance. He will support me, and will give me the courage to fulfill my mission. My consolation will be in the thought of the sacrifice made for you . . .

Ah! Dieu, what a difference there is between the French ladies and the Austrians! . . . The Queen of Naples came to meet me, took me in her arms, and displayed for me a surprising tenderness; but nevertheless I have no confidence in it; I do not think that the desire to be useful to me is the only object of her journey. She came with me to Braunau, and there I had to endure a toilette two hours long. I assure you that I am already as scented as the other Frenchwomen! The Emperor Napoleon has sent me a superb golden toilet case. He has not yet written me. Since it was necessary for me to leave you, I would like much better to be with him than to travel with all these ladies.

Ah! Dieu, how I regret the happy moments passed with you! It is only now that I appreciate them. I assure you, dear Papa, that I am sad and inconsolable. I hope that your cold is over. I pray for you every day. Excuse my scrawl. I have so little time. I kiss your hands a thousand times, and I have the honor to be, dear Papa, your obedient and humble daughter,

MARIE-LOUISE

Braunau, 16 March 1810.

That evening, the Empress bade farewell to all the persons who had accompanied her from Vienna, except Mme. Lazansky, who was expected to remain with her for at least a year. The next morning, at an early hour, she set out for Munich, where she arrived at ten o'clock in the evening. The following day, which was passed in the Bavarian capital, she received a letter from Napoleon, brought by one of his equerries. That evening, a grand dinner was given in her honor at the palace.

Before leaving Munich, to her great surprise and grief, Marie-Louise was notified by the Queen of Naples that, under orders of the Emperor, her companion, Mme. Lazansky, must return to Vienna. Caroline had taken a dislike to the lady, and wished to get rid of her in order to exercise a complete influence

over the new Empress. But the Queen, who thought that she had divined the character of Marie-Louise, was entirely mistaken: she took her timidity for weakness, her embarrassment for *gaucherie*; she believed that she had only to command, to assure her domination, but she turned the indifference of her sister-in-law into active dislike.

The Empress might have resisted, for they showed her no order from Napoleon, and indeed his sister, in this matter, went directly contrary to his wishes. But Louise gave way, for the sake of peace, and let her friend depart. "I could not make a greater sacrifice for my husband," she wrote her father, "and moreover I do not believe that it was in his thought." In this surmise she was entirely correct, for Napoleon had written Comte Otto the last of February that there would be no objection to the Empress having a *dame de compagnie* during the journey, and that he preferred a companion to a maid.

The sudden and unexpected return of the comtesse to Vienna made a great sensation, and created a very unfavorable impression on all classes of society. The reconciliation with France, on the part of the aristocracy, and indeed of the nation generally, was far from sincere. The Viennese, excited by Russian and English emissaries, gathered in the streets and public places, and were loud in their complaints of the "sacrifice" imposed upon their sovereign. The authorities were obliged to use force to quell these disturbances. In a despatch to Champagny, under date of the 24 March, Otto states that the Emperor had referred to this matter in a private audience which was accorded him at the palace. "What have you done to Mme. Lazansky?" demanded the Emperor. "Why send her back? Your master had given my daughter the privilege of taking a *dame de compagnie*, and, if there were an exception to make, Mme. Lazansky deserved to be the one, for she has always shown herself very favorable to France. But then, I must say that I attach no importance to the matter: the public, however, is amusing itself in forming a thousand absurd conjectures, and last night they made a disturbance in the city and the suburbs."

In the meantime, the Empress was continuing her journey, suffering from a bad cold, and ever increasing fatigue. At the capitals of Würtemberg and Baden, she received the same cordial reception as at Munich. Caroline, by her incessant complaints, continued to increase the antipathy she had inspired in her sister-in-law, and proved herself an almost insufferable travelling companion.

On the 24 March, after retiring at midnight, it was necessary to rise at daybreak, and leave Carlsruhr at eight, in order to reach the bridge across the Rhine before sunset. At Strasbourg, the Empress was received by twenty generals, and several divisions under arms. Here, at last, she was on French soil. The popular enthusiasm was great and universal, because the people thought that they saw in Marie-Louise, "not only the most brilliant trophy of the French arms, but also, after eighteen years of war, the gage of a peace, this time assured."

At Strasbourg, the Empress had the pleasure of seeing a familiar face, in Comte de Metternich, who was on his way to Paris. She also probably saw the Austrian general, Comte de Neipperg, whose presence at the fêtes was mentioned in a local newspaper. Who would then have imagined that this unknown officer would, only five years later, be the successor of the Emperor of the French in the affections of Marie-Louise?

Napoleon left the Tuileries at three o'clock on the afternoon of Tuesday the 20 March, and arrived four hours later at Compiègne, where for a week he anxiously awaited the arrival of his bride. He had ordered the château repaired, and magnificently decorated and refurnished. The garden was replanted and ornamented with statues. All the members of the Imperial family had arrived and everything was ready for the reception of the new Empress.

The plans for the meeting with Marie-Louise had been carefully arranged, in the most minute detail. Half-way between Soissons and Compiègne, a pavilion had been erected, composed of three tents, all hung in purple and gold. On the 28

March, the Emperor and his party, escorted by the cavalry of the Imperial Guard, were to proceed from Compiègne and wait in the first tent. On the arrival of the Empress, she was to enter the third tent. Then Napoleon and Marie-Louise were to enter the centre tent, where they were to see each other for the first time. After this meeting, they were to be escorted back to Compiègne in a State carriage. The Empress was to be installed in the château, and the Emperor was to pass the night in the hôtel of the Chancellery.

At noon on Tuesday the 27 March, Napoleon received a letter from Louise, stating that she was hastening her journey, and was leaving Vitry-le-François that same morning for Soissons. At the moment the letter reached him, Napoleon was walking in the park: on hearing that Louise was so near, he could repress his impatience no longer. He sent for Murat: and they left the park by a side gate, where a small carriage was in waiting, driven by a servant in plain livery. Travelling at full speed, they soon passed Soissons and reached the relay station in the little village of Courcelles. When they arrived there, the rain was falling in torrents. Napoleon and Murat descended from the carriage and sought shelter under the porch of a church opposite the relay post.

A few minutes later, the travelling coach of the Empress appeared, and drew up at the post-house to change horses. Napoleon rushed to the door of the carriage, and, entering, took Marie-Louise in his arms. She had been warned of his presence a moment before, by a postillion, who cried: "L'Empereur!"

Directing Murat to take the front seat, beside his wife, Napoleon placed himself at the side of Marie-Louise, and ordered the postillions to proceed at full speed to Compiègne. A courier, sent ahead, announced their arrival for ten o'clock that evening.

As soon as the news was received at the château, preparations were made in haste for the reception of the Emperor and Empress. Marshall Bessières, at the head of the cavalry of the Guard, galloped to the stone bridge, where forty years before Louis the Fifteenth had welcomed the dauphine, Marie-

NAPOLEON

Antoinette. In spite of the storm, the inhabitants of the town crowded the streets.

About nine-thirty, the arrival of the Imperial couple was announced by a salute of one hundred and one guns. The carriages rapidly traversed the avenues, and drew up at the door of the château, where the princes and princesses were waiting at the foot of the staircase. Napoleon descended first, offered his hand to Louise, and conducted her to the salon, where he presented to her, in turn, all the ladies, and then the men. This ceremony finished, he conducted the Empress to her apartment where they had supper, with no one present except the Queen of Naples.

Meanwhile, the Court were anxiously waiting for the Empress to descend, after completing her toilette. When an hour had passed, and every one was nearly famished, the chamberlain, Bertrand, appeared, and announced: "Their Majesties have retired!" Then he whispered to his wife: "*Ils sont couchés*!" The surprise was great, but no remarks were made, and they all went to supper.[1]

[1] La Tour du Pin, 2 *Journal*, 288.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

### 1810

## THE CEREMONIES AT PARIS

A Short Sojourn at Compiègne — The Court Leaves for Saint-Cloud — The Civil Marriage There — The Procession to Paris — The Arrangements at the Louvre — The Marriage in the Salon Carré — Absence of the Italian Cardinals — The Evening Fêtes — The Thirteen Cardinals Disgraced — Curious Error of Cardinal Fesch — Napoleon's Honeymoon — His Portrait at the Age of Forty — The Satisfaction at Vienna — Metternich's Stay at Paris — His Privileged Position at Court — His Private Interview with Marie-Louise — Her Happiness at This Time

AFTER the arrival of the Empress, the Court remained only two days at Compiègne before proceeding to Paris for the civil and religious celebrations of the marriage. On Wednesday, the 28 March, the ladies and gentlemen, who had not made the journey to Braunau, were presented. Marie-Louise had the pleasure of a long conversation with her uncle, the Archduke Ferdinand, the former Grand Duke of Tuscany, who was now known as the Grand Duke of Würzburg. She also saw and talked with the Austrian ambassador, Prince de Schwarzenberg, and the Comte de Metternich and his wife. Napoleon had never appeared so happy: he was fairly radiant with joy. That evening, contrary to his usual custom, he dressed for dinner, and wore for the first time the costume which his sister Pauline had persuaded him to order. But the habit did not become him, and he felt ill at ease. Ever afterwards, he wore on nearly all occasions the familiar green uniform of the chasseurs à cheval of his Guard, assuming for Sundays and days of gala his blue uniform with white facings.

On Thursday, Comte de Praslin was leaving for Vienna, and Napoleon and Marie-Louise charged him with letters for the Emperor. In her letters at this time, the Empress refers frequently to the affectionate reception which she had received

from all the members of the Bonaparte family, including those implacable enemies of Joséphine, Madame Mère, and Queen Caroline.

Friday, the Court left Compiègne for Saint-Cloud, arriving in time for dinner. The following day, there were no ceremonies, except a theatrical performance given in the evening.

The civil marriage of Napoleon and Marie-Louise was celebrated at the château of Saint-Cloud on Sunday, the first of April, at two o'clock in the afternoon, in the gallery of Apollo. For Napoleon, this room recalled many memories: it was here that the Ancients had sat on the decisive day of the 19 Brumaire, and that he had taken the oath as Consul in the gloom of the early hours of the following morning. Here too, on a glorious spring day, the 18 May 1804, he had been proclaimed Emperor of the French.

All of the Bonaparte princes and princesses were present, except King Joseph, who was absent in Spain. The ceremony of the civil marriage was very brief and very simple. Omitting the repetition of the titles, the form was as follows: In answer to the question of the arch-chancellor, Napoleon replied: "Je déclare prendre en mariage Marie-Louise, ici présente." The same interpellation was addressed to Marie-Louise, and answered in the same form. Then the arch-chancellor, Cambacérès, pronounced the marriage in these terms: "In the name of the Emperor and of the law, I declare that the Emperor Napoleon and the Archduchess Marie-Louise are united in marriage." At the same moment, the ceremony was announced by salvos of artillery at Saint-Cloud, repeated by the guns of the Invalides at Paris. The marriage formalities were terminated by the signature of the act, first by Napoleon and Marie-Louise, and then by all the witnesses of the ceremony. It was rather a remarkable fact that the weather was fair this Sunday at Saint-Cloud, while the city of Paris, only a few miles away, was deluged by a tropical storm. On the contrary, it rained Monday at Saint-Cloud, and the weather in Paris was magnificent. Even the skies seemed to smile on Napoleon!

Great preparations had been made at Paris for the religious ceremony on Monday, the second of April. The Arc de Triomphe, under which the procession was to pass, was then only just commenced, but a frame-work, covered with canvas, was erected on the stone base, and furnished a semblance of the completed structure.

The procession was led by the cavalry of the Imperial Guard. Then came the Emperor and Empress in the celebrated carriage of the Coronation. Four marshals of France, the colonel-generals of the Guard, rode beside the doors. Then followed all the dignitaries of the Empire in other carriages, and the rest of the escort. The cannon of the Invalides thundered, bands played triumphal marches, and all the bells in Paris were ringing.

Descending the magnificent avenue of the Champs-Élysées, and traversing the Place de la Concorde, where less than seventeen years before the head of Marie-Antoinette, the grand-aunt of Marie-Louise, had fallen under the guillotine, the cortège reached the Tuileries by way of the Gardens. The Emperor and Empress mounted the grand staircase to the State apartments on the first floor, and reached, by way of the Pavillon de Flore, the grand gallery of the Louvre. This gallery, a quarter of a mile in length, was lined on either side by two rows of benches, upon which four thousand ladies were seated, while the same number of men stood in double rank behind them. Shut in by the barriers which kept the centre free for the passage of the procession, these spectators had been waiting for five hours. Refreshments were served, and a number of bands played martial airs, so the time passed quickly. At three o'clock, the head of the procession appeared.

For this occasion, the celebrated Salon Carré, between the long gallery and the Salon d'Apollon, had been transformed into a chapel. The altar was at the eastern end, and tribunes had been erected on the three other sides of the room. Thirty feet in front of the altar, upon a platform and under a dais, two armchairs and two prie-Dieu had been placed for the

sovereigns. They were met at the door by the grand-almoner, Cardinal Fesch, who presented the Holy Water.

Napoleon and Marie-Louise took their seats, the Emperor at the right. On his side were placed the princes of the family and on the side of the Empress, all the princesses, in the order of their rank. In the tribunes were seated the grand dignitaries of the Empire, and distinguished guests. Suddenly the face of Napoleon, previously so smiling, became dark with rage, when he noticed the many vacant places in the ranks of the Cardinals. The thirteen Italian prelates were absent!

After the marriage ceremony, the Emperor and Empress returned to the Tuileries, where from the balcony of the Salle des Maréchaux, they reviewed the cavalry and infantry of the Imperial Guard, who defiled in the court below. At seven o'clock in the evening, a grand banquet was given in the theatre of the château. After the dinner, the sovereigns appeared upon the balcony of the central Pavillon de l'Horloge, and were cheered by the enormous crowd of people in the Gardens. Then there was a concert, followed by a grand display of fireworks in the Gardens and the entire length of the Champs-Élysées: the sight from the Tuileries was magnificent beyond description.

The following day, Tuesday, all the great bodies of the State presented their homages to the Emperor and Empress in the Throne Room of the Tuileries. The thirteen cardinals, who had refused to attend the ceremony on Monday, were present in the Salle des Maréchaux, awaiting the moment to pay their respects. At the end of three hours, an aide de camp of the Emperor appeared, and brought them the order to leave at once, as His Majesty refused to see them. In vain the "thirteen" wrote a joint letter of excuse, in which they declared that they had never presumed either to pass judgment on the first marriage of the Emperor, or to raise doubts as to the legitimacy of the second. Napoleon deprived them of their charges and their red robes as cardinals: forced to resume the costumes of ordinary priests, they were subsequently called the "black cardinals." They were interned in different cities

of France, under the supervision of the police, and lived entirely on the charity of the faithful.[1] But the "battle" is not always "to the strong": the Pope was to return in triumph to the Eternal City, and his persecutor, the all-powerful Emperor, was to die a captive, on the rock of Saint Helena!

In connection with the religious marriage, there is a curious fact, not generally known: the act signed after the ceremony by Cardinal Fesch gives as the date "the *first* day of April, *first Sunday* in Lent" — both facts incorrect!

Napoleon thoroughly enjoyed his honeymoon with Marie-Louise. Within forty-eight hours after his first marriage, he had been forced to leave Paris, to take command of the Army of Italy, and he had been separated from his wife most of the time during the next six months. After the faded charms of Joséphine, Louise was to him a new and delightful experience. The first morning, at Compiègne, he said to one of his familiars: "My dear fellow, marry a German girl. They are the best wives in the world — sweet, good, simple, and fresh as a rose."

Like Joséphine, Louise never opposed him in any way, and his slightest wish was to her a command. But unlike his first wife, Louise had religious and moral principles. She had no desire to mingle in politics, but she rallied to the Empire the last *intransigeants* of the Ancien Régime. A bond of union between the France of the past and the present, she seemed to hold out the hope of repose for all Europe, and to insure the stability of the Imperial edifice.

Napoleon displayed great regard for his young wife, and in his tenderness there was mingled the love of a husband and of a father. At the age of forty, the Emperor was much handsomer than in his youth. The celebrated "snuff-box" portrait of Paul Delaroche gives a good idea of his appearance at this time. His manners also had changed: from being brusque, and frequently violent, he had become calm and affable. "The Republican general had given place to a ma-

[1] Artaud, 258.

jestic monarch, familiarized with all the usages of Courts, with all the rules of etiquette, holding his rank like a Louis Quatorze, and playing his rôle of sovereign with the ease and talent of a great actor." From being taciturn, he had become a fluent talker, and his conversation possessed a charm which few could resist. Formerly careless of his personal appearance, even to the point of neglect, he was now always perfectly groomed. He not only endeavored to fascinate his young wife, he took pains to please her.

In brief, the marriage began under the most favorable auspices. The satisfaction at Vienna equalled that at Paris. On the 8 April, the French ambassador, Comte Otto, wrote the Duc de Cadore: "The letters which the Emperor and Empress of Austria have received successively from Their Majesties have caused them the greatest pleasure, but especially those presented night before last by Comte de Praslin. The Emperor was touched even to tears . . . Also by the two letters written by the Empress in German, in which she says, among other things: 'I am as happy as it is possible to be; what my father frequently said is verified, I find the Emperor extremely affectionate.' In communicating these details to me, Prince de Metternich wept for joy, and threw himself upon my neck to embrace me."

The celebrated Metternich, who at that time bore the title of comte, had left his father, the prince, in charge of the bureau of Foreign Affairs at Vienna, during his visit to Paris for the marriage ceremonies. Now that these were over, he counted on returning to his post, but was kept in Paris for six months. In a conversation with the Emperor, he had avowed his ambition "to find a line to follow in politics in a distant future." Napoleon replied: "I understand you, and your desires conform to my own. Remain a few weeks longer with us, and you shall have full satisfaction."

Very amiable and charming, a thorough man-of-the-world, a consumate diplomat, marvellously well-informed regarding France and the French, on very confidential, not to say intimate terms, with Napoleon and all the members of the

Imperial family, Metternich enjoyed a very privileged position at the Court of the Tuileries.

One day Napoleon asked him why he never visited the Empress except on the days of her receptions, when any one could go. "Come to see her to-morrow morning," he continued; "I will tell her to expect you." The following morning, therefore, Metternich went to the Tuileries, where he found Napoleon in the private apartment of the Empress. After a few words, the Emperor left them alone, closing and locking the door behind him. At the end of nearly an hour, Napoleon returned, laughing, and cried: "Well, have you had a good talk? Did the Empress have much evil to say of me? Has she laughed or cried? I do not call you to account: those are your secrets, between you two, which do not concern a third party, even if the third party is the husband." [1]

When Napoleon saw Metternich again, he said: "The Empress must have told you that she is happy with me: that she has no complaint to make. I hope that you will say so to your Emperor, and that he will believe you more than others." As a matter of fact, Metternich did report the incident to the Emperor Francis, and he believed it, as he had every reason to do, for Marie-Louise was perfectly happy.

[1] 1 Metternich, 106.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

## 1810

## THE POLISH TREATY

Pique of the Czar on Hearing of the Austrian Marriage — He Looks for a Rupture with France — The Public Blames His Mother — Napoleon Rejects the Polish Treaty — Russia Sends a Modified Form — Early Friendship of Alexander and Czartoryski — Their Dreams of Polish Independence — Czar Alexander Changes His Views — His Fear of Napoleon Revives His Early Plans — His Interviews with Czartoryski — Metternich at Compiègne — Objects of His Visit — His Talks with the Emperor — The New Treaty Received — Powerful Reasons for Failure to Ratify It — Napoleon's *Parvenu* Ideas — His Dilatory Tactics with Russia

IT IS a natural trait of human nature to feel a sudden regret at the loss of an opportunity which we have disdained, when we see another seize it. This seems to have been the feeling of Alexander when he first heard of the Austrian marriage. But he had too much pride to display his pique openly. It was only in his private talks with Caulaincourt that he did not hesitate to say that he thought the Emperor might have shown more consideration and delicacy. In what an embarrassing position they would all have been placed if the Russian answer had been an acceptance of the Emperor's demand, instead of a refusal! "It is fortunate," said Alexander, "that the age of my sister stopped us here . . . Where would we be now, if I had used less consideration for my mother, if I had shown less respect for her rights? What reproaches also would I not have had to make to you? The delays of which you then complained were therefore only the part of wisdom." [1]

Although Alexander continued to reiterate on all occasions his best wishes for the happiness of his ally, it was evident that he looked for an early rupture. This was also the general expectation in the three capitals most interested: Paris,

[1] Caulaincourt to Champagny, 26 February 1810.

Vienna, and Saint Petersburg. The members of the Austrian embassy at Paris made no attempts to conceal their joy and their confidence. This feeling was shared by the princes of the Confederation of the Rhine. Dalberg wrote Metternich at Vienna: "You can be sure of one thing: that in five months we shall be cold toward Russia, and in less than eighteen months at war with her." [1]

At Petersburg, there was an explosion of wrath against the Empress mother, who was generally blamed for the failure of the marriage, and she was insulted in the streets. There was a revolution in public sentiment, as Caulaincourt wrote Talleyrand; and those who had been the most opposed to the Continental System were the first to cast the stones. The advantages of the French alliance, so depreciated before, were vaunted on all sides. Every one wished to become French, as France drew away.

The Cabinet of Vienna, formerly so obsequious, assumed an air of cold dignity; and England sent a swarm of secret agents, who "knocked at every door," and whispered that Russia, repudiated by France, had no other refuge except with her old and true friend. In the midst of all these disturbing incidents, there came, like a clap of thunder out of a clear sky, the news that Napoleon had refused to ratify the Polish treaty, and had sent a substitute!

After much deliberation, the Russian Cabinet drew up a third form for the treaty, as a substitute for the second, proposed by Napoleon. Instead of saying bluntly: "The Kingdom of Poland shall never be reëstablished, it read: "His Majesty the Emperor of the French, wishing to give to his ally and to Europe a proof of his desire to deprive the enemies of the peace of the Continent of all hope of troubling it, pledges himself, as also His Majesty the Emperor of Russia, that the Kingdom of Poland shall never be reëstablished." The first Russian plan was a death sentence, the second was the same decree, with an explanation of the reasons for it!

The Russian counter-project was despatched from Saint-

[1] See Helfert, 354–358.

Petersburg on the 17 March, with instructions to Kourakine to present it to the Emperor for his signature, without allowing the slightest modification. At the same time, while soliciting Napoleon to wipe Poland forever off the map, Alexander, with his incurable propensity for double dealing, laid plans to reëstablish Poland himself!

Prince Adam Czartoryski, for many years the most intimate friend of Alexander, had returned to Saint Petersburg during the preceding autumn. After the final partition of Poland, in 1795, the Empress Catherine had demanded that the illustrious family of Czartoryski should send its sons to her as hostages, under pain of confiscation of their fortune, in case of refusal. The young Prince Adam was given a commission in the Russian Guards, and was well treated by the Empress. He was thus thrown with the Grand Duke Alexander, then eighteen years of age, who was the eldest son of the Czarowitz Paul, and a great friendship sprung up between the two young men. At that time, Alexander was full of romantic ideas of "liberty, fraternity and equality," and strongly opposed to the arbitrary régime of his grandmother. When his friend talked to him of liberty for the Poles, the words found an echo in his heart. He pitied these unfortunate people, and promised one day to console them for all that they had suffered. They talked of reëstablishing Poland, of giving her a national existence, and binding her to Russia by the closest bonds.

Five years later, Alexander was called to the throne, after the tragic death of his father, of which the remembrance must have always weighed upon his conscience. Once in power, he found himself tied by the traditional policy of his House: he was forced to abandon his altruistic schemes, and to reign as his predecessors had done. Nevertheless, he continued his friendly relations with Czartoryski, who was placed in the bureau of Foreign Affairs, and later was given charge of this department. He presented to the Czar several plans for the restoration of Poland, and once almost secured his promise. But little by little Alexander was led to modify his ideas, until he came to regard the renaissance of Poland, in any

form whatsoever, as the gravest peril to the security and unity of his Empire.

In his relations with Napoleon, Alexander had constantly pursued an equivocal and vacillating policy — conserving the alliance, while failing to fulfill its duties. But Napoleon was no longer satisfied with half measures: Alexander must belong to him entirely, or not at all. Fearing an early rupture of their relations, and a possible invasion, in which case Poland would be a powerful arm in the hands of his adversary, Alexander returned to the dream of his youth: he decided to anticipate the plans of Napoleon, and himself bind Poland to his Empire by ties of gratitude. He would restore to Poland her name, her laws, her institutions, her language; he would erect the State into an independent Kingdom, and place the crown upon his brow as Napoleon has assumed the Iron Crown of Lombardy: the Czar of All the Russias would become also the King of Poland. If the people of the Grand Duchy were now attached to Napoleon, it was because they saw in him their only hope; if they beheld upon their frontier a revived Kingdom of Poland, they would abandon the cause of Napoleon, to join hands with their compatriots.

Without doubt, this would mean war with France: a rupture of the alliance without apparent motive or cause; but Alexander was now so persuaded of the imminence of a conflict with Napoleon that he thought he would secure an advantage in beginning hostilities himself. He had already forgotten the lessons which Austria and Prussia had learned to their sorrow.

At first, this project of the Czar was a secret within his own breast, of which he did not speak even to his friend, but the return of the Polish treaty, unratified, and the unexpected news of the Austrian marriage, fortified his resolution. His head was suddenly full of the plans which, for ten years, had lain dormant in his mind.

In his *Mémoires*,[1] Czartoryski gives a circumstantial recital of the two interviews he had with Alexander in March and April 1810, at which these projects were discussed at length.

[1] 2 Czartoryski, 226–234.

But the plans, which ten years earlier the prince would have heard with transports of joy, now found him uncertain and troubled. He doubted the sincerity of Alexander, who "had habituated all the persons around him to look, in his resolutions, for motives different from those which he advanced." Nevertheless, at the repeated solicitations of the Czar, he promised to submit in writing a plan for gaining the hearts of the Poles. In all these talks with Czartoryski, Alexander had acted without the knowledge or advice of his minister, Roumiantsof, who had no confidence in the stability of the Poles.

As careful as he had been, it was impossible for Alexander to keep his secret entirely to himself. In the light of this double-dealing, is it strange that Prince Adam had little confidence in the sincerity of his friend, and that Napoleon felt that the aim of his ally, in the Polish treaty, was less to bind him morally than to undermine his credit with the Poles?

After several days of study and reflection, the prince prepared his memorandum, and read it to the Czar. As he was entirely in the dark as to the real intentions of Alexander, his plan was necessarily vague and uncertain. After discussing the matter at some length, they separated without reaching any conclusion. Czartoryski tells us that he had never seen Alexander so discouraged since the day of Austerlitz, "when the young monarch and his staff galloped off the field of battle, carried away by the torrent of the defeat, while behind them, from afar, arose the prolonged cheers of the victorious French, saluting their Emperor as he rode along their ranks." [1]

On the evening of the first of April, when Champagny returned from the civil marriage at Saint-Cloud, he found two letters from the chancellor, Roumiantsof: in the first he announced the new treaty, which had been transmitted by Prince Kourakine; and in the second, he stated that he should call soon, in regard to this important matter. The papers were all forwarded to Napoleon at Compiègne, where

[1] 2 Czartoryski, 409.

he had returned with Marie-Louise three days after the marriage.

At this moment, the Emperor was little disposed to consider the Polish treaty. Married only a few days before, his time and his thoughts were all devoted to his young bride. "He was content with his wife, with her family, and also with the extraordinary representative whom the Court of Vienna had accredited to him in the person of Comte de Metternich." [1]

This minister had not come, as was feared at Saint Petersburg, with the intention of offering Napoleon a treaty and an alliance. Metternich was too astute a diplomatist to precipitate matters. His idea was to form a stable understanding between Austria and France, and obtain some mitigation of the more onerous articles of the late peace, while always treasuring in his secret thoughts the hope of one day turning against Napoleon at an opportune moment, and avenging the wrongs of his country. But, in April 1810, that epoch seemed a long way off, and neither he, nor any one else, then dreamed that "the day" was so near at hand. For the moment, the only aspiration of Austria was to be allowed to live at peace, and to secure all the small advantages possible from the new family connection with her redoubtable adversary. In the meantime, the object of Metternich was to cultivate the friendship of the Conqueror, insinuate Austria in his good graces, and create between the two Courts an intimacy susceptible of being transformed later into an alliance. For this rôle, no one was better equipped. Possessed of rare political aptitudes, full of assurance, he did not display in the presence of the Emperor the embarrassment which paralyzed so many others. He knew how to listen and how to speak: "better than any one, he understood the means, by an adroit address, of causing the value of the Austrian entente to be appreciated." [1]

For the success of Metternich's plans it was necessary to bring about a break with Russia, and to that end he devoted

[1] 2 Vandal, 356.

[1] 2 Vandal, 358.

all of his energies. At present, Napoleon still regarded a rupture of the alliance as a remote contingency, but he had already begun to realize the truth of the prediction of Cambacérès, that a coldness on the part of the Czar would be the inevitable result of the Austrian marriage.

At Compiègne, where he was received on the most intimate terms, Metternich found the field open for his manœuvres. Feeling sure that the excitement at Saint Petersburg would increase, rather than diminish, he alluded in guarded terms to the probable attitude of the Czar. "As our dearest wish," he said, "is for peace and tranquillity, it cannot enter into our views that Russia should compromise herself." "What do you mean by compromise herself?" demanded the Emperor. "Russia only acts through fear," replied the minister. "She fears France. She is going to fear our relations with that Power, and from inquietude to inquietude, she is going to move." [1] With a rare foresight, Metternich had predicted the future attitude of Alexander, and had divined, by a secret intuition, the equivocal course which he was then pursuing.

"Make your mind easy," continued Napoleon, "if the Russians wish to compromise themselves, I shall pretend not to understand them." [2] But his words soon showed that he was far from taking this detached attitude. He spoke bitterly of the bad faith of Alexander in 1809: his failure to live up to the obligations of his alliance; and Metternich realized that the rupture of the alliance was much nearer than he had dared to hope. From that moment, he devoted all of his efforts to the cultivation of the seed of misunderstanding which he saw had been sown between France and Russia.

Immediately after these talks with Metternich, the Emperor received the text of the new treaty sent from Russia. At the first glance, his attention was arrested by the phrase that, "the Kingdom of Poland shall never be reëstablished." He was naturally displeased at this insistence upon a formula which he had once rejected, and was at a loss to understand

[1] 2 Metternich, 329. [2] *Ibid.*

the motives of Russia. He immediately dictated a very strong reply, which he sent to Champagny to put in diplomatic form: —

What Russia demands of him is a guarantee of his intentions: he has given it by his conduct and his language. In 1807, after Friedland; in 1809, after Wagram, he could have reconstituted Poland, and he did not do so. In his letters to the Czar, in his address to the Corps Législatif, he has affirmed that the reëstablishment of the Polish Kingdom does not in any way enter into his views; he has surabundantly proved it in offering to pass a treaty, the first article of which prohibits him from lending any support whatsoever to any attempts at restoration.

The dogmatic assertion that "*Poland shall never be reëstablished*," is contrary to usage and human prudence: no matter how strong the empires of France and Russia may be, there is a limit to their powers. The Divinity alone can speak in the manner proposed by Russia, and it would be impossible to find a parallel statement in the annals of history. He cannot go further than to affirm, in letters, discourses, and treaties, that *he will not favor it, will not do it, and will not aid it.*[1]

During the three weeks which he passed at Compiègne before leaving for the North, Napoleon had many long talks with Metternich. After the Empress had retired, he detained the minister, and, while walking up and down the long gallery of the château, gave himself up to that love of talking which grew on him with age. In these intimate conversations, Napoleon showed the grandeur of his thoughts, and also the feeble side of his character. Like all *parvenus*, he had a weakness for men of distinguished name and courtly manners, especially when they also possessed great intellects. Take Talleyrand for example, whom he had overwhelmed with reproaches, without entirely dismissing him; whom he continued to consult, while despising him. Metternich was too shrewd to agree always with the Emperor: with him flattery was raised to the point

[1] *Corresp.*, 16180.

PRINCE METTERNICH

of a fine art. In the words of Talleyrand, he was one of those who know how "to stroke the lion's mane." [1]

Napoleon was not ready as yet to precipitate matters with Russia, so when Champagny presented for his approval the note in reply to Russia, he put off sending it, and instructed the minister to tell Kourakine that he was ignorant of the Emperor's views regarding the counter-project, as "he had worked very rarely with His Majesty since his marriage." On the 16 May, Champagny also wrote Caulaincourt to the same effect. In short, Napoleon adopted the same evasive tactics for which he had so justly reproached the Czar only a few months before. His final thought is expressed in the despatch of 30 April from Champagny to Caulaincourt: "May you find some expedient calculated to satisfy Russia! . . . His Majesty does not wish Russia to be dissatisfied with the result of these negotiations."

[1] 1 Talleyrand, 421.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

### 1810

## THE JOURNEY TO BELGIUM

Napoleon's Devotion to His Wife — His Neglect of Affairs — His Waning Popularity — The Court Returns to Compiègne— Plans for the Journey to Belgium — Personnel of the Party — The Visit to Holland — The Rôle of Marie-Louise — Her Insignificance — Her Impression on the People — Napoleon Writes Alexander — The Czar's Patience Exhausted — Austria Solicits Napoleon's Intervention on the Danube — The Emperor Refuses — His Indiscreet Words to Metternich — He Finally Dictates His Answer to Russia — He Refuses the Czar's Demands — His Position Fundamentally Correct — But the Distrust of Europe Justified

DURING the first year of his marriage to Marie-Louise Napoleon devoted nearly all of his time to her, often to the neglect of the affairs of his Empire. Up to this time, he had never changed his mode of life to please any woman: now he modified his entire existence. Formerly, he had eaten a hasty luncheon, served on a small stand in his cabinet, and had rarely spent more than twenty minutes at the dinner table: now he lunches and dines every day with the Empress at a fixed hour, and waits without a sign of impatience for her to consume a twelve-course repast, from hors-d'œuvres to dessert. He had always loved open wood-fires, but Marie-Louise preferred the large German stoves, to which she was used, and fires were abolished. "I do not fear Napoleon," she said to Matternich, "but I begin to think that he is afraid of me." This was true: he actually stood in awe of this stupid young Austrian girl, simply because she was a daughter of the German Cæsars!

He called meetings of his ministers, and kept them waiting for hours, before he appeared. He refused to read important despatches, and let the couriers wait days for his replies. Affairs in Spain were going from bad to worse, and his presence in the Peninsula was absolutely required. His horses and cam-

paign equipment were waiting at Bayonne, and he thrice announced his departure, but cancelled the orders at the last moment.

"Genius," says Carlyle, "means the transcendent capacity of taking trouble." To this, Napoleon owed his success. No man in history ever worked harder than he: for twenty-five years, he toiled from twelve to sixteen hours a day, and rarely took more than four or five hours of sleep.

When, from the Baltic to Gibraltar, from the Channel to the Adriatic, the great French Empire depended on one man, who regulated and controlled everything, it required only a slight slowing-up of the motor for the machinery no longer to function properly. As Napoleon issued fewer and briefer orders, they were frequently misunderstood, and often badly executed. This was particularly the case in Spain, where the disagreements among the marshals, and their contempt for the authority of King Joseph, had a disastrous effect.

In his second marriage, Napoloen had dealt a severe blow to his popularity in France. He had risen from the ranks of the common people to the highest place in the State; but the people were proud of him, and of his glory: he was *their* Emperor — elected by their votes, and his grandeur belonged to them all. In place of their Emperor, however, they now beheld a sovereign, who, like the ancient kings, felt that his power was based on divine right, and not on the will of the nation. They no longer saw him in public, except when he passed rapidly in his carriage, with the Empress by his side, or showed himself with her on the balcony of the palace. He shut himself up in the Tuileries, and no longer received any one except the members of his family, or the great dignitaries of the Empire. The people began to murmur, as they had against the other "Austrian woman," and Marie-Louise was not much more popular than her aunt had been. They recalled the gracious Joséphine, with her smile, her affable manners; the services which she had rendered, her many acts of charity, and the sacrifice imposed upon her. Marie-Louise was only endured at all because she brought Peace — the

happy peace so ardently desired, so many times promised, and so often broken.

After the return of the Court to Compiègne, on the 5 April, Napoleon held only one meeting of the Council, gave no private audiences, and but one for the diplomatic corps. The few times that he appeared in public, he was very silent, and seemed enervated. On one occasion, he became absolutely motionless in the middle of the room, and stared at the floor for five or ten minutes, without saying a word; then, as if coming out of a trance, he made a sign to Marie-Louise, and retired to his apartment. He had a bad cough, and was always fatigued; but, nevertheless, the preparations were pushed for the journey to the Low Countries, where he wished to show the new Empress to the former subjects of the House of Austria. Marie-Louise was to have her *voyage de noces* to the departments of the Escaut, the Meuse, and the Rhine, in the countries where her ancestors had reigned for centuries. He thought that the old loyalty of the Flemish population would be revived at the dazzling vision of an Archduchess of Austria, united to their new sovereign.

"Metternich," he said to the comte, "you will come with us?" "To Brussels, Sire, is it not a little too soon?" Napoleon understood the allusion to the delicate rôle which an Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs would play in the provinces so recently annexed to the Empire, and modified his proposition: "At least," he said, "you will accompany us as far as Cambrai?" Metternich bowed, in sign of acquiescence.[1] During the days which preceded the departure for Flanders, Napoleon received him even more cordially, and seemed to wish to prolong his stay in France indefinitely.

On the 29 April, Napoleon began his journey. Accompanied by the Empress, he took the route for Belgium, by way of Saint-Quentin, Cambrai and Valenciennes. In his suite were, the royal couple of Westphalia, the Queen of Naples, the Viceroy of Italy, and the Grand Duke of Würzburg; also

[1] 2 Vandal, 366.

Prince de Schwarzenberg, and Comte de Metternich, who were respectively the ordinary envoy and the extraordinary ambassador of Austria. The two persons last named were to leave the party at Cambrai. The Emperor had thought it desirable, as companion to Marie-Louise, to have a German princess with them, so Catherine of Würtemberg was chosen. Augusta of Bavaria, the wife of Eugène, had also been considered; but, much to her disappointment, was left out, because she was thought to be "*mal élevée.*" [1] She consoled herself, however, with the reflection that this Habsburg archduchess was of common birth in comparison with a princess of the ancient House of Wittelsbach! At any rate, Eugène was a member of the party, as the Emperor had wished to show him particular honor, on account of his mother. Then, there was the chief of staff, Berthier; also the Minister of the Marine, the Secretary of State, and the households of the Emperor and Empress, over fifty persons in number. The entire party included one hundred and twenty-two individuals, transported in thirty-five carriages; and, in addition, there was an escort of over six hundred men, selected from the different corps of the cavalry of the Guard. It was almost like mobilizing a *corps d'armée!*

Before visiting Brussels, Napoleon descended the Scheldt upon a flotilla of war, entered Antwerp to the salutes of the cannon of the fortress, took part in the launching of a new warship, the *Friedland*, inspected all the fortifications on the coast and the frontier, and showed himself to the Hollanders. Everywhere, he ordered new public works, stimulated the authorities, reprimanded the clergy, and astonished the inhabitants, even if he did not arouse their enthusiasm.

In all the places they visited, the Emperor distributed his usual presents: the crosses of the Légion d'honneur, the snuff-boxes with his portrait, the rings with his initial. For Marie-Louise, he reserved the rôle of benefactress, of conqueror of hearts, in which Joséphine had excelled. It was Louise, who, in his name, was to give money to the poor;

[1] Masson, 228.

watches, chains, rings and bracelets, to the maidens who welcomed her with flowers, adding the few gracious words which doubled the value of the presents. In short, it was to her that the journey was dedicated. Napoleon exerted himself to please her, and to draw her out, but she never opened her mouth: never a kind word, never a smile for any one. At the balls given in her honor, she refused to dance even a single time. In her visits to the manufactories of lace, she paid not one of those little compliments of a connaisseuse, in which *the other* excelled, and which would have flattered the pride of the makers. In short, "this insignificant woman, so unworthy of the great man, whose destiny she shared, seemed to make it her task to be as disagreeable as possible to these Belgians, whose hearts were so disposed to love her." [1]

"Without doubt," apologizes one of her historians, "she did not venture to let herself out, because it was difficult for her to find words readily: she was obliged to make mentally the translation of the German phrase which came to her naturally, and thus to reform the construction." [2] Her natural timidity and inexperience increased her embarrassment, and she displayed on all occasions a rigidity which nothing could unbend.

No doubt, it was also due to timidity, that she appeared to the audience at the theatre, "very red, very embarrassed personally, with features absolutely devoid of expression." When, on the return to Brussels, an actor recited a new line:

Que par le monde entier, Louise soit bénie!

she arose to bow her acknowledgment, was taken suddenly ill, and obliged to leave her place. Joséphine would have seized the occasion to call forth redoubled cries of enthusiasm, "mais elle ne sais pas, ou ne veut pas, ou ne peut pas." In the end, she succeeded in causing around her a general feeling of *malaise*. The Emperor himself took on an air of constraint. From time to time, he made an apparent effort to address

[1] Mme. de La Tour du Pin, 2 *Journal*, 313. [2] Masson, 232.

some remarks to his wife, to which she hardly replied, and the conversation ceased at once.[1]

On one occasion, when she visited the fine Museum at Brussels, she seemed to be much interested in an excellent portrait of her illustrious great-grandmother, Maria Theresa. But when they proposed to hang it in her salon at Laeken, she replied: "No, indeed! The frame is too old." [2]

At Bruges, she visits at Notre-Dame the tomb of Charles the Bold and Mary of Burgundy, but "the three centuries, the fifteen emperors, the twenty generations, which separate her from these ancestors in gold and enamel, do not awaken in her even a thought," much less a word or a prayer. On her return, in ancient France, at Lille, Boulogne, Dieppe, Havre, Rouen, — she passes by, ever haughty and impassible, without a word, without a smile. In fact, not one of the acclamations, which saluted her during this long journey of a full month, seemed to move or interest her in the least. [3]

It was rather a strange coincidence, to say the least, that during this visit to the ancient dominions of the House of Austria, she did not receive a single letter from her father. The one which she found at Lille, on her return, filled her with joy: it was to her like "an angel of consolation," and she "reread it more than ten times."

The general impression which she produced upon the people, however, was negative, rather than unfavorable. A comparison with Joséphine was inevitable, and the general verdict was, that if the Emperor had gained by the change, the nation had lost.

During his absence, Napoleon had not entirely forgotten Russia. From the château of Laeken, near Brusssels, he wrote Alexander to thank him for his congratulations on the occasion of his marriage. In his letter he makes an allusion to the Polish question: "My feelings for you are invariable, like the principles which direct the relations of my Empire. Your Majesty will never have occasion to complain of France.

[1] Masson, 233. [2] La Tour du Pin, 2 *Journal*, 313. [3] Masson, 234.

The declarations which I made last December are the whole secret of my policy; I shall reiterate them as often as the occasion presents itself." [1] Napoleon seemed to think that this letter was equivalent to a treaty, and should be just as satisfactory; but Alexander felt differently. Caulaincourt soon discovered that the Czar regarded Napoleon's communication only as a manifestation of good-will, and was not at all reassured by it.

In fact, the patience of Alexander was exhausted, and he sent Kourakine, his ambassador at Paris, peremptory orders to obtain a positive answer from the Emperor, as to whether or not he proposed to ratify the treaty. The poor old man was obliged to arise from his sick-bed, and force the door of Champagny, to solicit a reply which the minister had been ordered not to give him.

Upon his return from Flanders, the first of June, Napoleon was informed of these proceedings, and directed Champagny to reply to Kourakine that, as his journey had been consecrated entirely to internal affairs, he had been obliged to put aside all matters pertaining to foreign policies.

With the coming of spring, the Russians had resumed along the lower Danube the operations which had been suspended during the winter, and there was every reason to believe that the Turks, overwhelmed by superior numbers, would soon be forced to cede the Principalities to the Russian Empire.

At Vienna, such a result was viewed with dismay, and Metternich was instructed, if possible, to secure from Napoleon a revocation of the concessions made to Alexander. When the ambassador took the matter up with the Emperor a few days after his return, Napoleon said: "It is your fault." He then pointed out that the hostile preparations of Austria had forced him, at Erfurt, to make certain engagements with Alexander, in order to assure the coöperation of Russia, which was essential to his plans. Now, it was impossible for him to tear up a solemn agreement, and violate his plighted

[1] *Corresp.*, 16481.

word: this would furnish Russia with a just excuse for an immediate rupture. He thus gave Metternich to understand that this time they asked of him the impossible. Admitting as a *fait acquis* the annexation of the Principalities, Napoleon said: "This act of Russian aggrandizement will form one day the basis of the reunion of France and Austria." [1] He thus indicated the Austrian alliance as a probable eventuality in the future.

At the same time, Napoleon was indiscreet enough to talk with the Austrian ambassador as freely as he would have done with his own ministers. He spoke of Alexander in a tone of disdainful pity: "The Emperor has good intentions," he said, "but he is a child." With his prodigious loquacity, which continued to grow upon him, he unveiled the secrets of his diplomacy: "It would be necessary for me to be God," he remarked, "to decide that Poland should never exist! I cannot make a promise which I am unable to keep."

Finally, Napoleon made up his mind to finish once for all this important affair, which had been left in suspense for three months. He sent for all the correspondence and reread it; then, on the first of July, he called Champagny to him, and dictated his reply, to be transmitted through Caulaincourt: [2]

"What does Russia mean by her language?" he said. "Does she want war? Why these continual complaints? Why these injurious suspicions? Does Russia wish to prepare me for her defection? I shall be at war with her the day that she makes peace with England." He then points out that Russia has secured as the fruits of the alliance: Finland, so long coveted by Catherine, and the two Principalities, and demands: "How has the alliance helped me? Did it prevent the war with Austria, which retarded affairs in Spain? Did the alliance make the success of this war? I was at Vienna before the Russian army was mobilized, nevertheless I made no complaints. Certainly they ought not to find fault with me. I do not wish to restore Poland. I have no desire to

[1] 2 Metternich, 361.

[2] *Corresp.*, 16181.

finish my career in the sands of her deserts. My duty is to France and her interests, and I shall never take up arms, unless forced to do so, for interests alien to my people. But I do not wish to dishonor myself in declaring that *the Kingdom of Poland shall never be reëstablished*, to make myself ridiculous in speaking the language of the Divinity . . . No, I can never make an engagement to take up arms against people who have done nothing to me, who have served me well, who have displayed for me a constant good-will and a great devotion."

At the end of his dictation, Napoleon softened his language: "If the Emperor is dissatisfied with the attitude taken by Russia, he is none the less firm for the alliance: he has always walked in a straight line, and without hesitation . . . With regard to Russia, the Emperor is what he has always been since the Peace of Tilsit."

In these long negotiations, which turned around a phrase, Napoleon was certainly fundamentally right. He had offered all the concessions which his dignity and his interests allowed him to make. It must be conceded, however, that he had prejudiced his case by the manner in which he had conducted it. "If Napoleon was right in the majority of the questions raised between him and Europe, taken individually, . . . he was wrong in the *ensemble*, wrong in the universitality of his pretentions, in the number, the audacity, the indefensible extensions of his enterprises, which, in his case, warranted extraordinary precautions, and justified distrust." [1]

[1] 2 Vandal, 392.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

### 1810

## DRIFTING TOWARD WAR

The June Fêtes at Paris — Social Failure of Marie-Louise — The Schwarzenberg Ball — A Terrible Catastrophe — Injury of Prince Kourakine — The Polish Treaty Again — News from the Danube — Napoleon's Interest — He Refuses to Violate His Erfurt Engagements — Alexander's Fear of Napoleon — Failure of the Campaign in Spain — The Effect at Saint Petersburg — Napoleon Tries to Avert a Rupture — His Unpreparedness at That Time — He Takes Some Precautions — Preparations of the Czar — Secrecy Maintained — Alexander's Apprehensions — The Rupture Precipitated by Napoleon's Measures

UPON the return to Saint-Cloud, the first of June, fêtes were announced, which would take up the entire month. Although hardly recovered from an accident, unsuspected by the public, Marie-Louise was forced to make her Parisian début, "upon that redoubtable theatre where every mistake is noted with an ill-will of habitual comparison, where, to succeed, . . . it is necessary to win every one by displaying gifts of grace and charm which alone establish an admitted sovereignty." [1] It was indeed a hard task for a young and inexperienced girl to appear before such an audience in the rôle of the incomparable Joséphine.

For the first time since his marriage, the Emperor seemed disposed to give some attention to public affairs. He called meetings of the Council for every day of the week: only on Thursdays, after a small dinner, was there to be a theatrical performance; on Sundays, after the Mass, a large reception, and the usual family dinner, followed by a concert in the State apartments. The other evenings there were only private receptions, limited to not more than fifty persons, men and women.

On Thursday, the 7 June, it was necessary to go to Paris to

[1] Masson, 236.

receive the compliments of the ambassadors at a solemn audience of the diplomatic corps. At one o'clock, there was a grand review in the Carrousel of the cavalry and infantry of the Guard. Following this, the Emperor and Empress, with a numerous suite, went to visit the Jardin des Plantes, which was closed for that day to the public. Then, by the boulevards and the Place de la Concorde, the procession returned to Saint-Cloud.

On Sunday, the Princesse de Schwarzenberg was received in great state at a private audience. She came in person to extend an invitation for Their Majesties to be present at a large ball to be given by the ambassador on the first of July. After this reception, and a hurried dinner, it was necessary to leave at eight o'clock, for the fête given by the City at the Hôtel-de-Ville. The cortège followed the same route as on the day of the marriage. The whole length of the Champs-Élysées was brilliantly lighted, as also the palace of the Tuileries, and the Louvre. All the details of the decorations had been under the charge of Prud'hon, and were a great success. Following the formal reception by the municipality, there was a ball, which was opened by the Empress, who had as her partner the King of Westphalia. After the quadrille, Marie-Louise returned to her throne, while the Emperor made the tour of the hall, asking his usual questions, in the endeavor to render himself popular. At midnight the sovereigns left the ball to return to Saint-Cloud. This fête had cost the good city of Paris over three million francs, but the Emperor was not content: Marie-Louise, for whom it was given, had offended everybody by her silence, her lack of cordiality and charm. At a distance, however, she produced a better impression. When she appeared at the Opéra two days later, she was loudly applauded, and Napoleon was pleased with the grace she displayed in bowing her acknowledgments.

On the 14 June, a magnificent entertainment was given by the Princesse Pauline, at Neuilly, where, from eight o'clock in the evening until midnight, without a moment of repose,

one surprise was followed by another. This was an ideal celebration, which surpassed in magnificence all which had preceded it, and was talked of for years to come. In the midst of all these marvels, Marie-Louise preserved her usual impassibility, "a real statue, as cold and lifeless as marble." "Ta fête m'a enchanté," said the Emperor to Pauline, but from Marie-Louise, not a compliment, not a word of thanks!

A week later, at the fête given by the Minister of War, she displayed the same lack of animation; but, on this occasion, with Eugène as a partner, she danced — "which seemed to please her, but which she did very badly."

On the 24 June, a grand festival was given by the Imperial Guard in the Champ-de-Mars, where, in the presence of three hundred thousand spectators, there were horse and chariot races, balloon ascensions, and, at the end, a magnificant display of fireworks. The Emperor came in state, with unusual ceremonies, saluted by sixty salvos of artillery. After dining with the kings and queens, he viewed, from a balcony, the popular games, and then returned to the ball-room, where a series of ballets was given by the dancers of the Opéra. This was the end of the fêtes, except that to be given on the first day of July by the Austrian ambassador. "The Empress," wrote a friendly observer, "has begun to lose her German traits; . . . she now turns out her feet, and bows with her head, and not her knees."

The hôtel of the Austrian ambassador, Prince de Schwarzenberg, was in the Chaussée-d'Antin, and the gardens in the rear extended along the Rue de Provence as far as the Rue Taitbout. It was the former residence of Mme. de Montesson, the morganatic wife of the Duc d'Orléans, the father of Égalité. Louis the Sixteenth had refused to acknowledge the marriage, so the Duc gave up his residence in the Palais-Royal and established himself in an adjoining house, Rue de Provence: the separating walls were torn down and the gardens were united, but the two private entrances were maintained.

Preparations for the fête had been made on a scale of extraordinary magnificence. As the rez-de-chaussée of the hôtel

was not spacious enough, in the gardens there had been constructed in wood a large ball-room, which was reached from the house by a wooden gallery. The walls and ceiling were covered with oil-cloth, decorated with painted ornaments. It would be hard to imagine a worse fire-trap.

Late in the evening, as the Emperor was about to leave, one of the gauze curtains was blown by a current of air against a side-light in the gallery; the fire communicated to the ball-room, which was at once in flames, and the only avenue of escape was by way of the gardens. Eugène, who was one of the first to perceive the danger, notified the Emperor. Napoleon, "with his decision of the field of battle," traversed the ball-room with a quick but measured step, offered his arm to the Empress, and with her disappeared by the nearest exit. In the panic which ensued, Princesse Pauline Schwarzenberg, sister-in-law of the ambassador, lost her life, and several others were so severely burned that they died a few days later.

Napoleon accompanied the Empress as far as the Place de la Concorde; then, while she returned to Saint-Cloud, he went back to the hôtel, where, in a pouring rain, he directed the work until three o'clock in the morning. At Paris, this event produced a very sad impression. Many persons recalled the catastrophe in the Place Louis-Quinze forty years before, on the occasion of the fêtes of Marie-Antoinette, and saw in it a presage of ill-omen. But this sombre presentiment was soon forgotten, only to be recalled later when the news was received of the burning of Moscow.

Among the number of those severely injured at the fire was Prince Kourakine, the Russian ambassador. Old and infirm, in hastening to escape, he fell, was trampled by the crowd, and his head and hands were badly burned. He was confined to his bed for several weeks, and disappeared from the scene just at the moment when his services were most needed in conducting the difficult and delicate negotiations over the Polish treaty.

In place of the note to Kourakine, drafted some time before,

but never sent, on the 4 July the Emperor dictated to Champagny a few lines, in which he demanded whether the ambassador was empowered to sign a convention which, while guarding all the interests of Russia, would conserve the dignity of France.

The following evening, Metternich appeared at Saint-Cloud, and asked for a private audience with the Emperor. He brought the grave news, just received from Vienna, that the Russian army had passed the Danube and was invading the central provinces of Turkey. At his first words, Napoleon went in search of a large map of the Balkans, which he brought unrolled in his hands. The interest with which he was observing the operations of the war was disclosed by the pins which indicated the positions of the different army corps. Following the information given by the ambassador, he moved these pins, to show the Russian advance, and carefully studied the map for a quarter of an hour, without saying a word. Then he announced his diagnosis: "Voilà la paix! Yes, it means peace: the Turks are forced to make it. Well! it is, as I said to you recently, the alliance between France and Austria: our interests are common." [1] These words, so different from the expressions used by him only three weeks before, show how far the Emperor had gone, in so short a time, in his detachment from Russia.

Two weeks later, under peremptory orders from his Government, Metternich again sought an interview. This time his demand was stated in these terms: "Is the Emperor decided to maintain in all particulars the engagements which he contracted at Erfurt, or will he lend himself to make in common accord with us a *démarche* at Petersburg which can save the Principalities?"

The reply of Napoleon was most positive. "I have contracted engagements," he said, "which I have neither reason nor pretext to violate . . . To act now contrary to these engagements would furnish Russia at once with a direct motive for war, which does not accord with my views; or would de-

[1] 2 Metternich, 364.

prive me absolutely for all time of the right to be believed in any of my engagements. What guarantee should I be able to furnish one day to you yourself, in case I break an explicit engagement for the simple reason that, circumstances having changed, I have less need to consider the Power with which I had contracted it."

However, Napoleon did not wish to allow Metternich to leave without a word of hope, and he added, in conclusion: "If the case arises that the Russians wish to be foolish enough to break with us, which will cost them Finland, Moldavia and Wallachia, acquired under the shield of their alliance with me, you know that you can count on me; you will then communicate your ideas to me, as I will communicate mine to you." [1]

At Erfurt, in 1808, Alexander had promised to be satisfied with Moldavia and Wallachia. Napoleon believed that he would keep his engagements both in letter and in spirit, and not cross the Danube. But, he said to Metternich, "L'appétit vient en mangeant," and he was not sure what plans Russia might have at present.

The apprehensions of Austria, however, were unfounded, for Alexander desired nothing more than the Principalities. He was now obsessed with the idea that Napoleon was preparing to attack him, and he was anxious to finish with the Turks in order to have all his forces free to meet this new peril.

In the meantime, the Peninsula War was still causing Napoleon much embarrassment. Notwithstanding the presence of Masséna, the ablest of his marshals, and a vast deployment of forces, no satisfactory results were achieved: the operations dragged on; the sieges were costly; the Spanish resistance was universal; and the French troops were becoming more and more discouraged. In the South, Soult had conquered Andalusia but failed to take Cadiz; Masséna, with three army corps, had not succeeded in subduing Portugal; Augereau, in Catalonia, and Suchet, in Valencia, only advanced step by step, obliged to storm every city they reached,

[1] 2 Metternich, 375–376.

quarter by quarter. The situation was naturally exaggerated by the English papers, which represented every check as a reverse, and every reverse as a disaster. These false reports spread to every capital on the Continent, and made a profound impression at Saint Petersburg. The time, to many observers, seemed propitious to fall upon France, or at least to throw off the burden of the Continental System, which was paralyzing Russian commerce. Napoleon realized this danger, and endeavored to avert it. He ordered Champagny to write Caulaincourt:

"Do not let them think that the Emperor is not prepared to make war again upon the Continent. If he has three hundred thousand men in Spain, he has four hundred thousand in France and elsewhere; the army of Italy also is still intact. The moment that war broke out, the Emperor could present himself upon the Niemen with an army more considerable than the one he had at Friedland; his intimate union with Austria permits him to count upon the support of that Power, already much alarmed over the progress of the Russian arms in Turkey. The Emperor undoubtedly does not want to make war; he values and regards his alliance with Russia as the base of his politics, but he will make war at once if Russia draws near to England."

Did this mean that Napoleon wished for war with Russia, and looked forward to it with sang-froid? Not at all — at least in the immediate future. If inevitable, he desired to postpone it, as he had endeavored to put off the war with Austria in 1809. Whatever he might say in his despatches, a new conflict at the present time would seriously embarrass him. The Spanish war was devouring his forces, depleting his treasury, and was leaving at his disposition few men and feeble resources. When he spoke of an army of four hundred thousand men, he was discounting the future: he could have them in 1811, or the year following, but he did not have them then. In the meantime, he endeavors to inspire fear, "de payer d'audace." Better than any one else, he realized the dangers of a war in the barren steppes of the North. Had he

not said, a short time before, in speaking of Poland: "Je ne veux pas aller finir mes destinées dans les sables de ses déserts!" But he was more determined than ever to bring to a couclusion his *vendetta* against England, and if Russia renewed her commercial relations with that Power, war was inevitable. This supreme conflict with the great Empire of the North seems to him more and more probable, and it is the fatal year of 1812 which he indicates for the date of the rupture.

He therefore begins to take certain "strategic precautions." If he does not send any more troops across the Rhine, if he leaves his army in Germany reduced to the three divisions of Davout, he demands with great secrecy of the King of Saxony to let him know the state of his forces, the condition of the fortresses, and the quantity of arms in the Grand Duchy. "In the times in which we live," he writes, "circumstances command prudence." He also designates the places to be fortified, and proposes to send the King thirty thousand muskets, to be stored at Warsaw.

While Napoleon was beginning to contemplate the possibility of war, Alexander was looking forward to it as a certainty, and was already making his preparations. But, with his usual duplicity, he concealed his intentions. To Caulaincourt, his words were as friendly and cordial as ever. In August 1810, he said: "I desire peace, I wish for the alliance." At the same time he was considering the strategic precautions to take in case of a rupture, and permitted a Prussian officer to submit to him a plan of campaign against France. Within the Russian frontiers, he was constructing a vast line of fortifications, to protect the central parts of the Empire, to cover the two capitals, and bar the routes of invasion. Everything was being done with feverish haste, as if the war were only a question of days. In the territory between the Dwina and Dnieper, the vulnerable point of the Empire, redoubts and entrenched camps were rapidly constructed, the men working "night and day, by superior orders."

But Alexander did not confine himself to the preparation of lines of defence. In the second half of 1810, before Napoleon

had moved a man, the Russian troops behind the frontier were heavily reënforced, and became a real field army. No reports of these movements were allowed to get out. In that vast and mute Empire, where silence was a tradition and a law, the French ambassador, surrounded by polite attentions, deprived of any serious sources of information, saw only the palace and the Court, where there were no indications of anything unusual. By the end of the year, Alexander expected to have mobilized on the western frontier three hundred thousand men, who, in case of need, could be reënforced by several corps recalled from the Danube. Knowing that Napoleon had only fifty thousand men in Germany, the Czar was at first inclined to assume the offensive, and seize Poland by a *coup de main*, but he finally abandoned this project, as will appear later.

From all these preparations, must we conclude that Alexander wished for war? No more than Napoleon. Unfortunately he had conceived the idea that Napoleon was only awaiting the propitious moment to attack Russia, and complete the subjugation of the Continent. That the Czar's fears were unfounded, it is difficult to assert. Napoleon, by his arbitrary methods, had given only too just grounds for apprehension. From the Pyrenees to the Niemen, his rule was absolute: "thinking everything permitted him, to complete his work, because nothing any longer seems to him impossible, he multiplies his acts of violence, accumulates his mistakes, and, believing that he is approaching his object, rushes with rapid steps in the path of perdition." [1] The despotic measures adopted to exclude British commerce from the Continent, and break the last powers of resistance of that nation, if they were not immediately successful, would certainly result in precipitating a rupture with Russia.

[1] 2 Vandal, 436.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

### 1810

## THE ELECTION OF BERNADOTTE

The Berlin Decree — The British Orders in Council — The Milan Decree — Holland Annexed to the Empire — Trouble with Sweden — Difficult Position of That Nation — King Charles — Death of His Heir — Napoleon Consulted Regarding a Successor — His Lack of Interest — He Favors Prince d'Augustenburg — Intrigue in Favor of Bernadotte — His Career — He Curries Favor with the Swedes — Suggested for Crown Prince — Sanction of Napoleon — His Indifference — Eugène Refuses His Offer — *Émeute* at Stockholm — Death of Fersen — Indiscretion of Desaugiers — Napoleon's Wrath — The Diet Meets — The Court Opposes Bernadotte — Intrigues of Fournier — His Credentials — His False Statements — Bernadotte Elected — Napoleon's Consent — His Reasons — Honors to Bernadotte — He Takes Leave

AFTER the conquest of Prussia in 1806, Napoleon had issued his famous Berlin Decree, proclaiming a Continental Blockade against English commerce. Master of all the ports from Naples to Dantzig, he forbade access of vessels under the British flag to this enormous extent of seacoast, and prohibited the direct importation of commodities. This idea of strangling English commerce was not original with him: it was a pet scheme of the Jacobins, and an inheritance of the Revolution. The reply of Great Britain was her Orders in Council of 1807, compelling all neutral vessels, under pain of seizure, to recognize her maritime supremacy. The effect of these acts was to make all neutral ships factors of British commerce: the importation of goods did not cease, but the means of transport was changed.[1]

Napoleon's *riposte* was the Milan Decree of November 1807, declaring that such neutral vessels were in effect English, that is to say enemies, and therefore liable to seizure in any port. Up to the present time, this decree, in most of the

[1] *Cf.* Mowat, 199–206.

BERNADOTTE PRINCE DE PONTE-CORVO,
CHARLES XIV OF SWEDEN

Northern countries, had been only a menace: he now proposed to enforce it strictly. This action, in effect, would deprive all Europe of commercial relations with the rest of the world; and it was beyond the power, even of Napoleon, to enforce such an edict. It led to the seizure of provinces, the annexation of kingdoms, and, finally, to the disastrous war with Russia.

The first decisive result of this policy was a break with his brother Louis. The King agreed to take energetic measures against England, but failed to keep his promise. The first of July 1810 he abdicated his throne, and on the ninth Holland was formally united to the Empire. In the course of the following seven months, by successive steps, Napoleon extended his control to all the territory between the Rhine and the Baltic, as far as the borders of Russia.

When he thought that he had closed all the ports on the North Sea and the Baltic, he suddenly realized that there still remained one point where English goods could enter. Between Mecklenburg and Prussia, there was a little stretch of sea-coast, a fraction of Pomerania: it was all that remained in Germany of the vast possessions formerly controlled by Gustavus Adolphus. In spite of the engagements of Sweden, Pomerania, and the port of Stralsund, remained open to English commerce. Moreover, the ports of Sweden continued to hold relations with the enemy, and were used largely by the smugglers who were awaiting an opportunity to land their goods on the opposite shores of the Baltic.

In May 1810, Napoleon sent Sweden a menacing letter, calling attention to this infringment of the treaty, and threatening a rupture in case of failure to comply with his demands. By tradition and by instinct, Sweden was inclined toward France. Through the folly of the late King, the country had plunged into a disastrous war with Russia, which had resulted in the loss of Finland. In order to resist the Czar, the protection of Napoleon seemed indispensable. On the other hand, a rupture with England would reduce the nation to the direst want. In exchange for the products of her rich mines

and forests, England supplied Sweden with many articles necessary for her existence — salt for example, which Sweden did not possess, and could not manufacture herself.

To these material difficulties, were added the perils of the political situation. As the result of a military conspiracy, Gustavus the Fourth had been exiled in 1809, and his uncle Charles the Thirteenth called to the throne. The latter was old and infirm, and had no child to succeed him. In June 1809, the States chose as heir to the crown Prince d'Augustenburg, brother-in-law of the King of Denmark. This prince had little to recommend him, but he was hailed as a pledge of national independence. Unfortunately, on the 28 May 1810, during a review, he was suddenly stricken with an attack of dizziness, fell from his horse, and was picked up dead. This catastrophe occurred at the very moment that Napoleon was pressing his demands, and caused general consternation.

As the situation would admit of no delay, it was necessary to reconvene the States, and elect a successor. The person naturally indicated seemed to be a younger brother of the late prince, but the King and his advisers felt so strongly the need of propitiating Napoleon that it was thought best to seek his advice before making any choice. Accordingly, on the 2 June, Charles wrote a most submissive letter to Napoleon, in which he clearly indicated his preference for the second prince of the Augustenburg family, and demanded the approval of the Emperor.

Napoleon seems to have taken but little interest in this election, which was to have such a decisive effect upon his destiny. He only wanted a man strong enough to compel the nation to break with England; and one not too subservient to Russia, while being at the same time *persona grata* to the Czar. For these reasons he excluded the Duke of Oldenburg, the brother-in-law of Alexander, as likely to be too friendly, and the King of Denmark, as calculated to increase the suspicions of the Czar.

In his reply, under date of the 24 June, Napoleon accepted with good grace the name of Prince d'Augustenburg. Since

the peace with Sweden, France had been represented at Stockholm only by a chargé d'affaires, but the Emperor had recently named Baron Alquier as his minister, and he now ordered the baron to set out at once for his post. At the same time he wrote Champagny: "You will instruct him to support warmly, but without compromising me, the prince of Denmark." By this term he designated Prince d'Augustenburg, who was a member of the younger branch of the Danish royal family.

Napoleon would have been much surprised if he had known that at this moment an intrigue was being woven at Paris to place on the throne of Sweden one of his marshals, Bernadotte, Prince de Ponte-Corvo. Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte, whose career was almost as romantic as that of Napoleon himself, was born in Pau in 1763, the son of a procurator. Having entered the army at the age of sixteen, he took ten years to become a sergeant, the highest rank that he would ever have attained except for the outbreak of the Revolution. That event gave him his opportunity, and five years later we find him a general of division, even before Napoleon had reached that rank. In 1797, he served under Bonaparte in Italy, where he made a good record; but he refused to take part in the expedition to Egypt. In 1798 he was sent as ambassador to Vienna, but was compelled to leave his post owing to a disturbance caused by his hoisting the tricolor over the embassy. Returning to Paris, he married Désirée Clary, sister of the wife of Joseph Bonaparte, who at one time was considered as a match for Napoleon. This same year, from July to September, he was war minister, in which capacity he displayed much ability. He held aloof from Bonaparte at the time of the coup d'état, but accepted a command under the Consulate, and on the founding of the Empire was made a marshal. He was rewarded for his services at Austerlitz by the principality of Ponte-Corvo. During the campaign of Jena, however, he was very derelict in his duties, and would probably have been court-martialed except for his connection with Joseph. In the last war with Austria he had again

incurred the ill-will of the Emperor by a proclamation in which he falsely attributed the victory of Wagram to the Saxon troops under his command.

In 1807, during the war between Russia and Sweden, Bernadotte had commanded in Pomerania a French corps which was intended to invade Sweden. At this time he had showed some favors to two brothers by the name of Mörner, and had later sent them back to Sweden. In June 1810, one of these officers, who had become a colonel, called on Bernadotte at his hôtel in the Rue d'Anjou at Paris and suggested that he should allow his name to be proposed as a successor to their deceased crown prince. At first, Bernadotte was not inclined to take the matter seriously, but a few days later the offer was confirmed by Comte de Wrède, a man of great prominence, who had been sent as envoy extraordinary on the occasion of Napoleon's marriage. The next day, Bernadotte went to Saint-Cloud and laid the matter before the Emperor, who said to him: "I know all about it, and leave you free to accept or refuse . . . I would rather see you there than any one else. I will support you with my consent; take what steps are necessary."

It is impossible to understand this *désinvolture* on the part of Napoleon in the case of a man whom he had always disliked and distrusted; whom he had given a command in several of his campaigns only because he feared to leave him behind in France. "By a unique exception in his career, as if the events which drew him on were so far beyond human calculations that even his genius could not dominate them, he yields to them, abstains from action, and almost from volition." [1] He had no one but himself to blame in the grave events which were to follow.

The only serious effort made by Napoleon to prevent the election of Bernadotte was to offer the crown to Eugène. He sent Duroc to the viceroy, who was then in Paris, to ascertain his views on the subject. After taking a day for reflection, and talking the proposition over with his wife, Eugène in-

[1] 2 Vandal, 458.

formed the Emperor that they would prefer to stay in Italy. In reaching this decision, they were influenced by the reluctance of Augusta to give up the Catholic faith, which would have been required. It is rather a curious coincidence that their daughter, Joséphine, afterwards married Bernadotte's son, Oscar, and their grandson became King of Sweden.

In the meantime, Bernadotte had left Paris for his country estate, where he lived quietly, while keeping in close touch, through his agents, with affairs in Sweden.

At Stockholm the candidature of the marshal at first was not taken seriously by the King and his ministers. But the representatives of Bernadotte, liberally supplied with money, began to make an impression on the populace and the army. On the 20 June, when the body of the late crown prince was brought back to the capital, there was a popular outbreak, during which Comte de Fersen, the former lover of Marie-Antoinette, lost his life. Terrified by this event, the Government turned even more anxiously to Napoleon. "Let the Emperor give us one of his kings, and Sweden will be saved," said M. Suremain, aide de camp of the King, to the French chargé d'affaires, M. Desaugiers.

Taking the Emperor too literally at his word, Champagny had broken off all correspondence with Sweden, and left the French representative entirely in the dark. At this moment there fell under the eyes of Desaugiers an apparently inspired article in the *Journal de l'Empire* of the 17 June, in which the attention of the Swedes was called to the King of Denmark as a desirable choice. Encouraged by the language of the official journal and implored by all the Swedes around him to say a word, he announced himself in favor of the King of Denmark, and the union of the two crowns, as the best means of defence against the Muscovite peril.

When the Emperor read on the 25 July the despatch in which Desaugiers innocently rendered a report of his imprudent declarations, there was an outburst of wrath, and Champagny was ordered to recall the unfortunate chargé d'affaires. Napoleon still wished to keep on good terms with Alexander,

at least in appearances, and it was principally with this object in view that he had abstained from supporting Bernadotte.

To repair this error as quickly as possible, the Emperor again, and this time definitely, ordered Alquier to start for his post. Even if he left Paris the same day, however, it was impossible for the minister to reach Sweden before the end of August, that is to say after the election, which was to be held during the first half of the month.

In fact, the electoral diet met in the city of Œrebro on the 25 July. The Government, perplexed between the contradictory statements of the French chargé d'affaires and the letter of the 24 June from the Emperor, hardly knew what course to pursue, but finally decided to support the Augustenburg prince. To this end, it employed an involved diplomacy, directed mainly against Bernadotte, who was receiving strong support. His principal adherents were found among the lower classes, while the Court and the aristocracy opposed him on account of his revolutionary antecedents. Everything seemed to point to the election of Augustenburg, when a report spread through the assembly that Napoleon had spoken, and that he desired the choice of Bernadotte.

This rumor was entirely false, and was the work of an impostor. A Frenchman by the name of Fournier, formerly vice-consul at Gothenborg, where he had left a very bad reputation, had seen in the candidacy of Bernadotte an opportunity to rehabilitate himself. Owing to his former position, he had the entrée of the office of Foreign Affairs, and succeeded in persuading Champagny that it would be to the interests of France to have an unofficial observer present at the meeting of the Swedish Diet, to keep Paris informed regarding the proceedings. By way of credentials, the minister furnished Fournier with a paper known as a "diplomatic passport," drawn up in his own hand. Armed with this document, and instructions from Bernadotte, the agent left Paris immediately, and reached Œrebro a few days before the meeting of the Diet. Upon reflection, Champagny realized

the error that he had made in furnishing the discredited vice-consul with such credentials, and wrote the French legation at Stockholm to disavow him, but it was too late.

As soon as he arrived on the scene, Fournier posed as the unofficial emissary of the French Government, which was prevented by high interests from appearing openly. He stated that the Emperor was in favor of the election of Bernadotte, and made free use of his passport to gain the confidence of the Swedes. At the same time, he organized a very strong campaign in favor of his candidate; but the argument which prevailed over all opposition was the feeling that Napoleon at last had spoken and indicated his choice.

The only serious opposition came from the aged King, who could not reconcile himself to the thought of having a "French corporal" as the heir to his throne. On the advice of his ministers, however, Charles finally gave way, and the 21 August Bernadotte was chosen by the Diet, the members acting under the belief that they were carrying out the wishes of the Emperor. A word from him, pronounced in the beginning, would have prevented all these misunderstandings, and this deplorable outcome.

On receipt of the news from Sweden, Napoleon was both surprised and displeased. For a moment, he thought of refusing his consent, and keeping Bernadotte in France. He made the mistake of not following this first impulse, and allowed Bernadotte to depart, after having loaded him with presents, and obtained his promise to enforce the Continental System. His course is explained by a remark to Metternich: "In any event, I could not refuse my consent, for a French marshal on the throne of Gustavus Adolphus is one of the prettiest tricks ever played on England." [1]

On Sunday, the 23 September, there was a grand review, lasting four hours, in the court of the Tuileries, which Marie-Louise watched from a window of the château. Afterwards, there was the usual family dinner, to which a stranger was invited for the first and only time: the Prince de Ponte

[1] 2 Metternich, 392.

Corvo, with his wife. He came as a marshal of the Empire, but in a Swedish uniform, and was presented to the Empress in his quality as crown prince of Sweden. The following morning, before the hunt, Bernadotte appeared at Saint-Cloud, again in Swedish costume, and took his final leave of the Emperor.[1]

[1] For the election of Bernadotte, see: *Corresp.*, 16712; Foreign Archives, Denmark, 183, and Sweden, 294; 2 Metternich, 365–367, and 388–392; *Revue Contemporaine*, mars et avril 1868; and *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, 15 Septembre 1855.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

## 1811

## THE KING OF ROME

Last Months of 1810 — New "Probabilites" Announced — Questions of Etiquette — The Court at Fontainebleau — Baptism of Louis-Napoleon — Return to Paris — Preparations for the Heir — Rooms at the Tuileries — The Palace at Chaillot — A Grandiose Scheme — Program for the Carnival — Night of the 19-20 March 1811 — Birth of the King of Rome — Excitement in Paris — Search for a Title — "King of Rome" Adopted — Name of the Prince — The *Ondoiement* — Napoleon's Presents — General Apathy — The Baptism at Notre-Dame — The Fêtes — The Wall of Etiquette — The Change in Napoleon — His Break with His Family — Portraits of the King of Rome — The Dynastic Type — Napoleon's Love for His Son

IT WILL be interesting to note how Napoleon was occupied during the last half of this year of 1810, when affairs in the Peninsula so urgently demanded his presence there, when France was slowly drifting into war with Russia, and he was showing so much indifference to events in Sweden.[1]

From the 6 to the 17 July, he was hunting at Rambouillet, while the obsequies of Lannes were being held with great ceremony at Paris. Perhaps he felt that these honors to the hero of Essling might displease his Austrian bride. On the return to Saint-Cloud, the usual monotonous Court life was resumed, only broken by spectacles and promenades. At this time, Napoleon wrote an affectionate letter to his *very dear* father-in-law, to announce new "probabilities" in the case of the Empress. In fact, Marie-Louise, in her own words, "begins to be a little monstrous."

The first ten days of August were passed at Trianon, to which Marie-Louise had taken a great fancy on the occasion of her first visit in June, and the rest of the month was spent at Saint-Cloud. When Napoleon was not occupied with promenades, audiences, receptions, dinners, balls, concerts,

[1] Schuermans, *Itinéraire général de Napoléon 1er.*

and other social events, he gave hours to revising and making more rigorous the Etiquette of the Imperial Palace. He regulated the places of the kings and princes; decreed the privileges to be accorded to the ducs, comtes, and barons; and decided what carriages should be allowed to enter the courts of the palaces!

This uneventful existence was continued until the last of September, when the Court went to Fontainebleau. This was a repetition of the visit of 1807, but with more pomp and etiquette. The days were spent in hunts and promenades; the evenings were devoted to amusement: three times a week there was an opera or a comedy; on other evenings there were receptions, and on Sunday, a concert.

On Sunday, the 4 November, Cardinal Fesch baptized in the chapel of the palace all of the children to whom Napoleon, for several years past, had promised to give his name. At the head of the list was the youngest son of Louis and Hortense, the future Emperor Napoleon the Third. Several years before, Napoleon had ordered made a register in which to record the births of the children of the Imperial family, and the name of Charles-Louis-Napoleon was the first to be inscribed in the book.

When the Cardinal demanded: "What names do you give these children?" Napoleon saved himself from embarrassment by producing a written list. All of the children to whom Joséphine was to have been godmother bore the name of Joseph or Joséphine, but the name of the new *marraine* was Louise! Among the girls who were presented on this occasion was the child of Eugène, Joséphine, the future Queen of Sweden.

This ceremony over, on the 16 November the Court returned to Paris, where the pregnancy of the Empress was officially announced. Marie-Louise was glad to leave Fontainebleau, where she had suffered from the cold, and been bored by the everlasting tragedies which Napoleon loved.

On leaving Fontainebleau, Napoleon intended to go to Cherbourg, where all the plans had been made for his re-

CARDINAL FESCH

ception, but Marie-Louise insisted upon going with him, so he gave up the trip.

Upon his return to Paris, as before, the time of Napoleon was almost entirely taken up with the Empress, and with plans suggested by her coming accouchement. The rooms in the Tuileries set aside for the King of Rome were those previously occupied by Duroc, the grand marshal of the palace. They were situated on the ground floor, with most of the windows on the Carrousel, and were parallel to the private suite of the Empress, which faced on the Gardens. The apartment had been redecorated and refurnished at an expense of nearly half a million francs.

But it was necessary to think of a permanent habitation for his son: the King could only live for a few years in the apartment improvised in the palace. First of all, the Emperor thought of Bagatelle, the little château in the Bois de Boulogne, purchased in 1808; but soon a much grander scheme took form in his mind. Some years before, his architect, Fontaine, had prepared plans for an Imperial palace to be erected at Lyon, at a cost of ten million francs. When the model was shown the Emperor, some one made the remark that the building would be much more effective on an elevated site, and the architect at once proposed the heights of Chaillot. This idea, which had been dormant in the mind of Napoleon for several years, now returned to him, and on the 29 November he ordered Fontaine to present to him "a project for embellishing the Bois de Boulogne, by adding a country-seat built upon the summit of the heights of Chaillot."

In his mind's eye, Napoleon could already see this glorious edifice, reached by a splendid new avenue from the Arc de Triomphe, with the Bois de Boulogne as a park, and Bagatelle as a hunting-lodge. At that time, it would have been easy to carry out the plan, for there were only open fields, with a few scattered houses, between the Bois and Chaillot.

But all this was for the future. At the present time he wanted a small private garden, reached by an underground passage from the Tuileries, with a pavilion where the child

could rest. He asked Fontaine how much this would cost. "Five hundred thousand francs," replied the architect. "Five hundred thousand francs! I will spend only twenty thousand. The architects ruined Louis the Fourteenth."

But this streak of economy was not lasting. At the same moment, he was projecting or ordering new constructions in more than half a score of the cities of the Empire. Disliking the Tuileries, regretting the Élysée, which he had given to Joséphine, he was even thinking of remodelling Versailles for his use.

To amuse the Empress, who was not interested in building, Napoleon arranged for performances two or three times a week in the private apartments, generally comedies or light operas. For the *étrennes* of 1811, he ordered for her a handsome medallion portrait of himself, and the finest specimens of Sèvres and of the Gobelins, for her to present to her family.

In January 1811, Napoleon returned several times to his plan for a palace to be erected for the King of Rome, at an estimated cost of twenty millions, and once was on the point of issuing orders to begin the work, but yielded to the criticism of the Minister of the Interior. His idea was to have an edifice superior to all the palaces past and present, and he demanded full particulars regarding the residences of the Roman emperors, as well as all the existing palaces in Europe. The building, which was to be four hundred mètres in length, was to dominate the heights of Chaillot, where the Trocadéro now stands, overlooking the Pont d' Iéna and the Champ-de-Mars, with the École Militaire in the background. The palace was to be the centre of a group of buildings extending along the river on either side, to house different bureaus of the Government. Even after the lapse of a century, this grandiose plan seems senseless. At the downfall of the Empire in 1814, nothing had been done beyond clearing the ground, and starting on the foundations.

When he was not busy with his building plans, Napoleon gave hours to regulating the amusements of the Court. Here are the orders for the Carnival season: "Three grand masked-

balls will be arranged for the winter: one at the hôtel of Prince de Neuchâtel, one at the Arch-Chancellor's, one at Comte Marescalchi's. During the Carnival, there will be a grand full-dress ball each week; these balls will be given by Queen Hortense, Princesse Pauline, Prince de Neuchâtel, and the ministers of Police, War, Foreign Affairs, and the Interior. To these balls they will invite all the Court, and the strangers who have been presented." He then goes on to prescribe even the costumes to be worn on these occasions!

In spite of the advanced stage of her pregnancy, the Empress was present at all these functions up to the middle of February, and went out with the Emperor in her carriage as late as the 4 March. After that date, the Empress arranged every fine day to take the air on the terrace bordering the Seine, which had been closed to the public. But it was necessary to pass through a crowd of people, and Napoleon finally gave orders to construct the subterranean passage from the Château to the terrace. With all possible haste, however, it was impossible to complete this work under two weeks.

On the 15 March, the Grand Duke of Würzburg arrived, to be present at the accouchement of his niece. It was arranged to have an entertainment for him on the evening of the nineteenth, but when the invited guests arrived at eight o'clock, they were informed that the pains had begun, and the play would not be given. The persons who were expected to be in attendance at the ceremonies of the birth were ordered to present themselves at the palace without delay, wearing the same costumes as at the Sunday Mass. Soon, the brilliantly lighted rooms on the ground-floor were crowded by a throng of dignitaries, who waited in silence. At midnight, a supper was served.

About five o'clock in the morning the accoucheur, M. Dubois, told the Emperor that the birth would not take place for another twenty-four hours, so everybody was sent home. Therefore, at eight o'clock, in the salon where the members of the family were to assemble, there was no one present except Eugène and Würzburg, who were both living in the

Château; while in the salon reserved for the dignitaries, there were only Berthier and Cambacérès. An hour passed, and at nine-twenty on the morning of Wednesday, the 20 March, the child arrived.

The excitement in Paris that morning is vividly depicted by Mme. de La Tour du Pin in her *Journal.* [1]

"The morning of the 20 March 1811 we heard the first discharge of the guns of the Invalides. We descended into the street All the carriages stopped; the merchants, upon the thresholds of their shops, the people at their windows, counted the strokes. We heard every one say: 'Three, four, five, and so on.' There was an interval of about a minute between each discharge. After the twenty-first there was a profound silence, but at the twenty-second, there were spontaneous cries of: 'Vive l'Empereur!'

"That evening I dined with my sister, Mme. Bertrand, and there we were notified that the child would be privately baptized at nine o'clock, and that the ladies who had been presented at Court could attend the ceremony.

"Mme. Dillon, my sister and I went. We had to enter by the Pavillon de Flore, and pass through all the apartments, as far as the Salle des Maréchaux. The salons were full of the dignitaries of the Empire, men and women. Every one endeavored to be at the edge of the passage-way, kept open by the ushers, where the procession was to pass to descend to the chapel. We managed to manœuvre so as to find ourselves on the landing of the stairway. From this point we enjoyed a very rare sight, that of the old *grognards* of the Vieille Garde, arranged in order upon each step, every one wearing the cross upon his breast. They were forbidden to make a movement, but a very vivid emotion was depicted upon their stern faces, and I saw tears of joy in their eyes. The Emperor appeared at the side of Mme. de Montesquiou, who bore the child, with his face uncovered, upon a cushion of white satin covered with lace. I had the opportunity to obtain a good look at him."

[1] 2 *Journal d'une femme de cinquante ans,* 308. See also 3 Vandal, 119–120.

The marriage contract was no sooner signed, in February 1810, than Napoleon began to think of the title to be borne by his son, the heir of the Grand Empire. None in the traditions of France was suitable, for the ancient provinces had been abolished by the Revolution, and the name of a French city would be a mere courtesy title inferior to the titles of victories borne by the marshals. Only one city was sufficiently universal to typify the grandeur of his Empire, and that was Rome, "the Eternal City." But he was not content with a merely honorary title for his son: he would therefore take Rome from the Pope, revoking the donation made by Charlemagne, "his august predecessor." By the same act he would affirm his possession of the Western Empire, abandoned by the Emperor of Austria on the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire.

For over eight centuries, King of the Romans had been the title of the German Emperor-elect prior to his coronation by the Pope, or the title of his successor if elected during his life-time. It was only a courtesy title, however, and did not imply possession of Rome. But Napoleon wished his son to be King of Rome, not King of the Romans, and the decree of the 17 February 1810 reads: "The Prince Imperial bears the title and receives the honors of King of Rome."

The King of Rome was named Napoleon-Francis-Joseph-Charles: Francis for his grandfather and godfather, the Emperor of Austria; Joseph, both for his uncle the King of Spain, the second godfather, and the Grand Duke of Würzburg; and Charles for his paternal grandfather. As soon as the birth certificate had been signed, the usher opened wide the double folding doors of the salon, announced "the King of Rome," and Mme. de Montesquiou appeared with the child.

The Emperor himself presented his son at the *ondoiement*, which was celebrated by the grand almoner, Cardinal Fesch, assisted by M. de Rohan, the almoner of the Empress. The procession then returned to the State apartments, where the little King was invested with the cordons of the Légion d'hon-

neur and of the Couronne de fer. The salvos of one hundred and one guns were repeated; there were fireworks in the Place de la Concorde, and all the public buildings, except the Tuileries, were illuminated.

Napoleon showed his pleasure by the magnificent donations to all who were connected with the happy event. To Marie-Louise he gave a single string of pearls valued at half a million. To Dubois, the physician in charge, he presented a hundred thousand francs, "as mark of satisfaction," and later gave him the star of the Légion, and the title of baron. All of his other gifts were on the same magnificent scale. He also remembered the poor of Paris with a donation of two hundred and fifty thousand francs.

The indifference of the public, as shown in the letters and memoirs of the time, was in marked contrast with the official celebrations. The people saw in this birth a supreme favor of Destiny to one who for fourteen years had succeeded in every enterprise he had undertaken. His life was so much superior to the common existence that it seemed supernatural. His career was viewed with curiosity, with astonishment, with admiration, but without enthusiasm.

On Sunday, the 9 June, the little King was baptized with great pomp in the chapel of Notre-Dame. Napoleon himself had arranged even the smallest details of the celebration. "For him, the baptism was much less a religious ceremony than an enthronement of his dynasty." [1] The custom in France, as pointed out by Champagny, was to have only one godfather, but Napoleon followed the etiquette of the Court of Vienna and had three. The godmothers were Madame Mère and Queen Hortense.

The baptism at Notre-Dame also was without precedent under the Ancien Régime: the royal children had all been baptized in the chapel at Versailles, since that palace was built; and before that, at Saint-Germain, the Tuileries, the Louvre, Fontainebleau, or the Palais-Cardinal, according to the residence of the Court.

[1] Masson, *Napoléon et son fils*, 146.

All the credible witnesses attest that, although there was a large crowd to view the procession, there were no cheers, and little enthusiasm was shown. The ceremony at the cathedral was followed by a banquet at the Hôtel-de-Ville. The following Sunday, there was a grand fête at the Tuileries: a review, a State dinner, a concert upon the terrace, and a ball in the apartments. It was first published that on this occasion, not only the Court, "but a very large number of the inhabitants of the city" would be invited. At the last moment, however, it was announced that only persons presented at Court would be admitted, and this gave great offence to many who had expected to be present.

These fêtes and ceremonies demonstrated how completely Napoleon had abandoned his former democratic ways, which had endeared him to the nation. Between himself and the people, he had erected a wall of etiquette, which none but the privileged few could pass. Only the Court really counted: the official world, a little, the middle classes, not at all. In the many promotions of June 1811, we do not find the name of a single member of the Institute. Only the officials were invited to the ceremonies: only those presented at Court — nearly all ci-devant nobles — were welcomed at the fêtes. The crosses were all reserved for the former émigrés, who now crowded the Tuileries. The Imperial etiquette was more severe than that at Versailles in the days of Louis Quatorze.

The Parisians, whom Napoleon now took so little pains to placate, recalled his effusions of Frimaire An XIII, at the début of the Empire, when he said to the Corps Municipal: "I wish you to know that, on the field of battle, amidst the greatest perils, upon the seas, even in the heart of the desert, I have ever in my thoughts the opinion of this great European capital; next to that, always, the approval of posterity, so strong in my heart."

The ceremonies of the baptism also showed how completely Napoleon had broken with his family. He was on bad terms with Lucien, interned in England; with Louis, an émigré in Austria; with Caroline and Murat, who were preparing to set

up their independence at Naples; with Joseph, who refused to abdicate; with Élisa, whom he forbade to come to Paris. The only one in his good graces was Jérôme, who submitted tamely to all his demands.

Among all the portraits of the baby King of Rome, it is difficult to select the one which was true to life, and to decide whom he resembled. The only one of Isabey which is known was that sent by Marie-Louise to her father, and this was probably flattering. The sketches of Prud'hon are doubtless more authentic: he was the painting-master of the Empress, and had a better opportunity to observe the child. The head is large, the forehead very high, and the eyes prominent (*fleur de tête*) like those of the mother. In a letter to Joséphine, Napoleon said that the baby had his eyes and mouth and chest. But the trustworthy portraits all show a strong resemblance to Marie-Louise. The other pictures are only *dynastic*: "The Emperor had adopted for his own effigy an expression quite different from the reality. He had wished to fix in the memory of his people, in a definite fashion, the type by which his subjects should imagine their sovereign. The Emperor, founder of the fourth dynasty, must appear to his people majestic, serene and grave, handsome with a beauty almost superhuman, like the deified Cæsars. That his portraits resemble his person, he cares not; it is enough that the distinctive traits stand out from the paintings, the statues, or the monuments, in such a way that no one can fail to recognize him." [1]

For his dynasty, Napoleon demands the same official type: every artist who executes the portrait of the child must make of his baby face a juvenile reduction of the Imperial visage. In all the paintings therefore, we find a reproduction of Napoleon; and not of the real Napoleon, but of the typical Napoleon, of whom David, Gérard, and others had formulated the official image. It is as impossible to place confidence in these portraits of the King of Rome, as it is to accept those of the Emperor painted after 1805.

[1] Masson, *Napoléon et son fils*, 204–205.

KING OF ROME

All that we know of a certainty is that the child was strong and healthy, and had a good disposition. He was ever present in the thoughts of the Emperor, by whom he was adored. On the second of May 1821, at Saint Helena, when he was already in the agony of death, Napoleon tried to speak of his son, but the words failed him; and it was upon the portrait of his boy that he fixed his dying gaze, as if he wished to carry this image beyond the tomb!

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

### 1811

## DAILY LIFE OF THE EMPRESS

Napoleon Returns to His Former Habits — Serious Results of the Advice of Dubois — Move to Saint-Cloud — Life There — The Existence of Marie-Louise — Her Love of Books — Her Good Education — Fondness for Flowers — Painting, Music, and Needle-Work — Riding and Driving — Sincerity of Her Love for Napoleon? — Weakness of Her Character — Mme. de Montebello — Her Domination — Napoleon Dislikes to Dismiss Her — Visit to Cherbourg — Impression Made by the Empress — Return to Saint-Cloud — Visit to Trianon — The Two Fêtes-Days — Visit to Holland — Reception of Marie-Louise at Brussels — Banks of the Rhine — Back at Saint-Cloud

THE birth of the King of Rome produced one result which Marie-Louise had not anticipated: it broke up the intimate married life which she had led with Napoleon for nearly a year. It was not that the Emperor was less affectionate, or less considerate, only that he was no longer so constantly in her company. He resumed his former custom of taking his déjeuner in his cabinet, and dined alone in his apartment. He called more frequent meetings of the Council, and gave a great deal of time to public affairs, which he had so long neglected. He also held many reviews of the troops which were beginning to pass through Paris on their way to Germany. He struck off the fetters which had bound him for so many months, and became his former self. As Dubois had informed him that a second confinement would imperil the life of the Empress, he indulged in several passing fancies, which he carefully concealed from the jealous eyes of Marie-Louise. Dubois had acted according to his convictions, and in good faith, but he was entirely mistaken, as subsequent events were to prove. In any case, the consequences were most serious, for the birth of other children might have drawn closer the bonds which united them, have prevented their separation, and assured the future of the Napoleonic dynasty.

On the 17 April, the Empress went out for the first time: by the new subterranean passage she walked to the terrace on the border of the river; and the following day she drove to the Bois. After the ceremonies of the *relevailles*, which, contrary to the custom under the monarchy, were celebrated quietly in the palace, on the 20 April she went to Saint-Cloud for the summer. Here their life was calm and uneventful, but Napoleon was unable to devote much time to his wife. Sleeping in a separate room, and up at an early hour, he worked until nine o'clock. Then he took his breakfast alone under the trees in the park, where Marie-Louise usually joined him, and the nurse brought the little King. After caressing the child, and playing with him for a short time, Napoleon returned to his work. At four o'clock, if the weather was fine, he either drove or rode with his wife, for an hour or two. At seven o'clock, they dined together, and, not later than ten, Napoleon returned to his desk, where he worked until a late hour in the night.

For the first time, therefore, Marie-Louise was thrown almost entirely upon her own resources. Her child occupied but little of her time, as he was constantly with his nurse and governess. This year, she passed only three months with the Emperor at Saint-Cloud, the rest of the time being taken up with their trip to the Low Countries. But the two following years, when Napoleon was absent in Russia and in Germany, she spent about six months at Saint-Cloud, and nearly all of the remaining time at the Tuileries.

Her life was not very different from that which she had led as a young girl at Schönbrunn, or the Burg in Vienna, but with an entire absence of the intimate family associations which she had had there. Her time, regulated to a minute, passed with the monotony of a convent. At eight o'clock, her women drew the curtains, and brought her the Paris morning papers, which she glanced over. She took her breakfast in bed: a cup of coffee or chocolate, and some Vienna *kuchen* which a Paris pâtissier had learned to make. At nine o'clock, she made her toilette, over which she spent but little time. Then her

child was brought to her for a few minutes. She took her luncheon with her dame d'honneur, Mme. de Montebello, and also her dinner, when the Emperor was absent.

Unlike Joséphine, she loved to read, and spent much time with her books, which were mainly of a serious or instructive character. In the month of June 1810, she devoured eighteen volumes of Mme. de Genlis. Her library, composed of books which she selected herself, shows the tendency of her mind, and does her credit.

Marie-Louise had brought from home a number of elementary books in German, French, and Italian. As we have already seen, she had received a very good education for a young girl of her time. She wrote French much better than she spoke it: she could never overcome her German accent, and to the last made such mistakes as to say: "Napoléon qu'est-ce que veux-tu?" On the other hand, as she had little occasion to speak German, she forgot her syntax, and was reproached by her family for her French idioms. She spoke Italian quite well, and at the Court of France had little call for other languages. Her instruction, without being very profound, was extended and varied. She had a good knowledge of geography, natural history, and history — particularly of the present and former possessions of the House of Austria.

She seems to have been particularly interested in arboriculture, botany, and ornithology, and possessed quite a number of works on these subjects. Like Joséphine, she was very fond of flowers, but she did not have the magnificent gardens and hothouses which were the glory of Malmaison. Her rooms at the Tuileries and Saint-Cloud were always filled with rare flowers, which she paid for from her private purse.

She had always been fond of painting, and at Paris took lessons from Prud'hon and Isabey. As Napoleon disliked the odor of oils, she finally gave them up, and confined herself to water-colors and crayons. She was equally interested in music, and her private apartment, in all the Imperial palaces, was furnished by orders of the Emperor with a harp

and a piano, always of the same pattern. These were purchased for her at Vienna, as she preferred the German makes. Her taste in music was excellent, and, besides the French and Italian operas, she had in her collection all the German classics.

She was also fond of needle-work, and had a teacher in embroidery. But even with all these distractions, her time was not fully occupied, and she had in her rooms every kind of game imaginable: cards, dominoes, checkers, backgammon, and so on.

As has already been intimated, Marie-Louise was a little *gourmande*, and had the German habit of eating at all hours of the day and night. She had in her apartment numerous appliances for making and serving tea and chocolate. She was very fond of cakes and bon-bons, and had a standing order with the most celebrated manufacturers of Paris.

There were also the pleasures of out-of-doors. Like her aunt, Marie-Antoinette, she had been deprived, as a young girl, of the pleasure of riding, and she was anxious to learn. As this met with the approval of the Emperor, she took her first lessons in the riding-school at Saint-Cloud upon her return from Antwerp in 1810. The following year, after her confinement, she was in haste to resume this pastime. At Saint-Cloud, Compiègne, and Fontainebleau, she rode with the Emperor; at Paris, she followed the hunt with him in the Bois, or rode for exercise in the Park of Mousseaux. When Napoleon was absent, she rode with Mme. de Montebello. Driving also amused her, but not so much, especially at Paris, where the only place was the Bois de Boulogne, with its straight and dusty roads. The only attraction there was the luncheon or tea at Bagatelle, which she enjoyed. At Paris, there was no promenade, except upon the reserved terrace of the Gardens, until Napoleon recovered the Élysée from Joséphine, in exchange for Laeken. But even there, she found little pleasure in walking in a small garden, enclosed with walls.

Such in brief was the daily life of Marie-Louise,[1] about as

[1] See Masson, *Marie-Louise*, 287–322.

narrow and confined as that of a young girl in a convent, or an odilisque in a Turkish harem. She could not receive any one without the approval of the Emperor; she could not write freely even to the members of her family, because she knew that her correspondence all passed under the eyes of the "Black Cabinet." For this reason, it is necessary to take with a large grain of salt such letters as the following, to her father: "If that were possible, my tender love for my husband has increased greatly since the birth of my son; the proofs of attachment which he has given me . . . would have drawn me to him for all time if his good qualities had not already done so." It is an old saying that, "deeds speak louder than words," and certainly the attitude of Marie-Louise, in the days of misfortune which followed, did not show any profound love or attachment for her husband. Napoleon was right, when, in speaking of Joséphine after her death, he said: "She, at least, would never have abandoned me!"

But, in estimating the character of Marie-Louise, we must remember that she was naturally weak: she had always had some one to direct her, some one to lean on, and this was to be her lot throughout life. She had formed a warm attachment for her dame d'honneur, Mme. de Montebello, and it was she who controlled her thoughts and actions in the absence of the Emperor.

The Duchesse de Montebello was the widow of Marshal Lannes, killed at the battle of Essling. She had been chosen by Napoleon because he felt that he owed this mark of distinction to one of his oldest and bravest comrades-in-arms. She was ten years older than the Empress, a very beautiful woman, cold, calm, and of irreproachable reputation. In appointing her, Napoleon had said: "I am giving the Empress a real lady of honor."

This lady, who was the object of the passionate love of Marie-Louise, had from the first deliberately set out to gain the favor of which she calculated the profits. It was she who, at Braunau, instigated the Queen of Naples to send back Mme. Lazansky, and who, by the same stroke, aroused the

resentment of Marie-Louise against Caroline. She had made herself useful in deciphering the illegible letters of the Emperor; she had made herself agreeable by expressing great admiration for the House of Lorraine and all its members; she had made herself indispensable during the confinement of Marie-Louise by displaying an energetic devotion, which alone had calmed and reassured the patient when she thought her life was in danger. Jealous of her influence, she endeavored, not only to prevent Marie-Louise from forming other friendships, but to turn her even against the Emperor. One day when Napoleon had reproached her for a minor infraction of the rules of etiquette, she exclaimed to Marie-Louise, after he had left: "I am very glad that M. l'Étiquette has finished: I never liked long sermons." Napoleon soon realized that he had made a mistake in his selection, but she showed no intention of resigning, and he could not dismiss her without causing a scandal which would reflect upon the glorious memory of his friend. Marie-Antoinette had her Mme. de Polignac; Marie-Louise had her Mme. de Montebello, and the influence of the latter was as *néfaste* as that of the former. The Montebello made such good use of her opportunities that, after her death during the Second Empire, it took six sales, over a period of two months, to dispose of the sixteen thousand objets d'art in her inventory, and an enormous sum was realized.

On the 23 May, with the Empress, Napoleon left Saint-Cloud to make his long-deferred visit to Cherbourg. The work on the harbor there, begun under Louis the Sixteenth, abandoned during the Revolution, had been resumed by Napoleon, and was now nearing completion. Notwithstanding the imminence of the war with Russia, Napoleon still had in mind the project for a descent on England, and he had selected this place as his naval base.

On this, as on the two previous journeys, Marie-Louise appeared haughty, bored, silent — "a wooden head," said the Normans. She had not a word to say in response to the compliments addressed to her by the authorities, not a smile

for the young maidens who offered her flowers. This time, however, there was more excuse for her lack of animation, for this journey, so soon after her confinement, had fatigued her terribly. The first day, they were on the road for nineteen hours, from four in the morning until eleven at night. On two other occasions they made journeys of twelve hours. Napoleon, accustomed to the marvellous endurance of Joséphine, and ignorant of the care necessary for a young mother, showed but little consideration for his wife. His mind was full of the grandeur of the plans for Cherbourg, which Vauban had once termed "audacious."

On the day of his arrival, according to his custom, the Emperor began at an early hour the inspection of the fortifications and the docks. He visited the harbor and the fleet, and lunched with the Empress on the dike. He also went down into the vast basin, forty feet deep, which was to accommodate fifty vessels of the line. As dynamite was then unknown, it had been cut out of the solid rock with picks, which removed only a flake of stone at each stroke. On the 4 June, after an absence of less than two weeks, they were again back at Saint-Cloud.

After the baptism of the King of Rome, on the ninth, there was a week of rest, and then it was necessary to return to Paris for the opening of the Corps Législatif on the 16 June. This was a very tiresome day, as the opening of the session was followed by a grand banquet in the Salle des Maréchaux, a spectacle in the theatre, and a large reception. The heat was stifling, and Marie-Louise was glad to get back to Saint-Cloud at midnight.

After a fortnight of comparative tranquillity at Saint-Cloud, on the 10 July they went to Trianon for two weeks, *en petit comité*, a party of only twenty-one persons. Among those invited were the wife of Berthier, who was a Bavarian princess, and the grand écuyer, Caulaincourt, now home from Russia, with whom the Empress could talk German. As in the days of Marie-Antoinette, the life was familiar and intimate, and every one enjoyed the relief from etiquette.

After another fortnight at Saint-Cloud, and a week at Rambouillet, where it rained nearly all the time, they returned to Saint-Cloud in time to go to Paris for the celebration of the fête of Napoleon on the 15 August. As none of the princes was at Paris, there was no family dinner as usual, so Napoleon escaped alone with the Empress in the evening; they promenaded the boulevards arm-in-arm like a pair of lovers, and looked at the illuminations. Marie-Louise was never so amused, and she talked of this escapade years afterward.

Ten days later, la Saint-Louis, the fête-day of the Empress, was celebrated at Versailles. It rained nearly all day, and the heat and humidity were almost unbearable. The illuminations and decorations were ruined, and the day was not a success. Four days later the Court went for a visit of three weeks to Compiègne.

On the 19 September, Napoleon started for Holland, leaving the Empress to follow him two days later. She seems by this time to have become accustomed to the Emperor's mode of travelling, for she left Compiègne at two o'clock in the morning, and reached the château of Laeken, near Brussels, at the same hour the day following, having lunched at Péronne and dined at Mons.

At Brussels, Marie-Louise was received with great enthusiasm, by the authorities and by high society, as the great-granddaughter of Maria Theresa of Austria, their former sovereign. Many who had not left their hôtels to make a call since the Revolution, came to pay their homages. One grande dame, in order to make a good appearance, was forced to paint a bay horse black, so as to have a matched pair! The memoirs state, that to these ladies their Archduchess "appeared timid and embarrassed, lacking assurance and good breeding." But she made a good impression by ordering nearly one hundred and fifty thousand francs of lace, of the manufacturers who were out of work.

After a sojourn of a week, on the last day of the month Marie-Louise rejoined the Emperor at Antwerp, where he had

arrived that morning. "You can easily imagine the pleasure I felt," she wrote.

The whole month of October was spent in visiting the principal cities of Holland, where Napoleon, as usual, was occupied from morning to night in his tours of inspection. Marie-Louise, who had lost nearly all her hair, and grown very thin, was fatigued beyond expression.

The first of November, they left Holland for the Banks of the Rhine. But on the fourth, at Cologne, on receipt of urgent despatches from Paris, the Emperor decided to return home at once. He hardly allowed Marie-Louise a few hours to see the cathedral and the city, and then set out. At seven o'clock on the evening of the 11 November they reached Saint-Cloud, where they were welcomed by the princes and the grand dignitaries of the Empire, as well as the King of Rome, in the arms of his governess.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

### 1810–1811

### CRISIS OF THE ALLIANCE

Sentiments of the Emperors — Danger of a Rupture — Desperate Condition of England — Success of the Blockade — Laxity of Russia — The Czar Urged to Act — Napoleon's Personal Letter — The Czar's Position — Sweden, the Danger Spot — Measures of Bernadotte — Alexander Sends an Envoy to the Crown Prince — Bernadotte's Jealousy of Napoleon — His Reasons for Deferring a Rupture — Final Crisis of the Alliance — The Treaty Broken by Both Parties — Napoleon Not Ready for War — The Situation in the Peninsula — Alexander's Preparations Completed — His Plan of Attack Abandoned — Its Chance of Success — Napoleon Begins to Prepare for War

ON THE very eve of the outbreak of hostilities between France and Russia, the two emperors continued to express for each other the same sentiments of regard, and even of affection. Alexander said to M. de Bray, the Bavarian minister: "I love the Emperor Napoleon like a brother; I think that I have inspired in him the same feelings, and you should count on a constant accord between our Cabinets." Napoleon wrote Alexander: "Permit me to assure Your Majesty that if Destiny should render inevitable a war between us, it will not change in any respect the sentiments with which Your Majesty has inspired me, and which are in no danger of change or alteration."

At Paris, the representatives of the Czar were treated better than any of the others, and if Napoleon occasionally showed some particular attentions to the Austrian ambassador, he at once explained it to Russia, by saying that the health of Kourakine made it impossible for him to receive the same favors. At Saint Petersburg, the Czar still displayed the same affectionate regard for Caulaincourt.

The two Governments also continued to observe the letter, if not the spirit, of the treaty of alliance. The ports of Russia

remained closed to vessels flying the British flag, and Napoleon kept the Czar informed of all his negotiations with England, as if he wished to prove that he at least would never conclude a separate peace.

Nevertheless, in spite of all these efforts to preserve the outward forms of a complete accord between the two Courts, the situation was strained, and affairs had reached a point where the least additional pressure would break the bonds of the alliance. This rupture occurred when Napoleon wished to have Russia adopt the measures of extreme rigor against English commerce which he had imposed on his other allies. At the very moment when the plans of Napoleon had never been so near success, his ally failed him. The desperate condition of England at this time is clearly revealed in Green's *History of the English People*.[1]

The annexation of Holland, the closing of all the German ports, the rigorous surveillance of all the coasts, the confiscations of British goods wherever found upon the Continent, had caused enormous losses to English commerce. At London, there were numerous failures: one by one, commercial houses of the highest credit, of European reputation, were forced into bankruptcy. At the same moment when the credit of England was thus shaken, the threat of war with the United States seemed about to close the last remaining outlet for British commerce. The enormous growth of the national debt, strikes of workmen, the dearness of corn, all combined to depress the people. The war had brought to England a period of unprecedented prosperity: the continuance of the conflict threatened to cause her ruin. In every section of the country, there was want and misery, with the danger in the immediate future of universal distress, which might lead to a popular uprising and a class war.

It is strange that Napoleon never prohibited the export of food-stuffs to England, a measure which would have reduced the nation to the direst extremities, and probably have forced the Government to sue for peace. He seems to have had the

[1] 2 Green, 413–418.

idea that the more the British bought, the sooner they would become bankrupt. "The outlook would have been hopeless," writes Mr. Rose, "had not our great enemy allowed us to import Continental corn; if, besides lack of work and low wages, there had been the added horrors of a bread famine." [1]

Napoleon was well informed of this situation through the abstracts of the English papers, and the reports from his agents in London. The economic war appeared at the point of bringing him the results which all his victories from Austerlitz to Wagram had not achieved. The maritime peace, so ardently desired, so long sought, seemed almost within his grasp. On the Continent, the only ports which remained open to English goods were those of Russia, on the Baltic, where vessels flying a neutral flag, generally American, were allowed to discharge their cargoes. Some of this merchandise was consumed in Russia, but a large quantity, in immense caravans of seven hundred wagons at a time, was forwarded through Germany to every part of the Continent. If Russia continued to allow this commerce to enter, she would furnish England with the gold to maintain her credit, pay her troops in the Peninsula, and prolong the war indefinitely. On the other hand, if the Czar resolutely closed his ports to this commerce, Great Britain would quickly be brought to terms. The question of peace or war rested entirely in the hands of Russia. The private letters of Caulaincourt to Champagny at this time clearly show the courageous frankness of the ambassador, and reveal at the same time his blindness as to the real intentions of Alexander.[2]

In a remarkable letter, sent to Caulaincourt by special courier, Champagny writes: "At this moment when we are achieving the end for which so many sacrifices have been made, represent to the Russian Government how important it is to the common cause, how necessary it is for Russia who desires peace, to strike with France the last blow which must bring it about . . . Never has England found herself in such dis-

[1] 2 Rose, 203.

[2] Foreign Archives, Russia, 150 and 151. See also 2 Vandal, Appendice III.

tress, and this distress is above all the result of the last measures taken by the Emperor . . . We know from reliable sources that the English commerce is ruined, and that the nation now wishes for peace, while a few months since it was indifferent to the continuation of the war . . . The Emperor attaches so much importance to this matter that he has desired me to make it the subject of a special letter which has passed under his eyes; and, in having these measures adopted throughout the Russian Empire, you will have afforded His Majesty a new proof of the talent and the zeal which you give to his service." [1]

A few days after the despatch of this letter, news was received at Paris of the appearance in the Baltic of an immense fleet of vessels loaded with English goods. Refused entrance at all the ports of Mecklenberg and Prussia, the convoy had set sail for Russia. At that time there was present in Paris the same Colonel Tchernitchef who, during the campaign of 1809, had been sent to the French headquarters as a bearer of letters from the Czar. He had recently been sent again to Napoleon with the same mission. The Emperor took advantage of his presence at Fontainebleau, where the Court was then in residence, to explain verbally, at great length, the French policy regarding England, and then placed in his hands a personal letter to Alexander, worded as follows:

"Monsieur mon Frère, Your Imperial Majesty has sent me such handsome horses that I do not wish to delay in expressing my thanks.

"The English are suffering greatly from the reunion of Holland, and the occupation which I have made of the ports of Mecklenberg and Prussia. Every week there are bankruptcies at London which produce confusion in the City. The factories are without work, the warehouses are overflowing. I have just had seized at Frankfort and in Switzerland immense quantities of English and Colonial merchandise. Six hundred British vessels which were wandering in the Baltic have been refused in Mecklenberg, also in Prussia, and have

[1] Letter of 16 October 1810.

been directed toward the States of Your Majesty. If you admit them, the war will still go on; if you sequester and confiscate their cargoes, . . . the counter-stroke which will be given England will be terrible. It depends upon Your Majesty to have peace or to make the war continue. Peace is and should be your desire." [1]

For several days Napoleon had also been dissatisfied with the attitude of Sweden, who hesitated to break with England. The Russian envoy was accordingly charged also with a verbal message to the Czar, praying him to address a severe admonition to the Swedish Government, demanding war on England, and the confiscation of British goods.

The demands of Napoleon were not well received at Saint Petersburg. The Czar was not willing to increase the misery of his people by prohibiting all commerce with England. Besides, he no longer desired to see the ruin of Great Britain, the last remaining barrier against the absolute domination of Napoleon in Europe.

Roumiantsof had already notified Caulaincourt that Russia could not consent to the new measures of oppression. "The Emperor is disposed," he said, "to do England all the harm possible, but he cannot afford to do himself more harm than he does to the enemy." [2] The Czar also said to the ambassador that "his actions, his words, his writings, all proved the interest that he took to do everything which could be useful or even agreeable to his ally." [3]

In reply to Napoleon's letter, Alexander reiterated for the hundredth time his usual protestations: "I have nothing more at heart than the continuance of the alliance which assures the tranquillity of Europe." He claimed that he was carrying out vigorously the measures against English commerce, as proved by the numerous seizures in his ports; that hardly sixty vessels, of different nationalities, had arrived lately; "therefore

[1] *Corresp.*, 17071.
[2] Caulaincourt, 8 October 1810.
[3] Caulaincourt, 5 October 1810.

the six hundred vessels of which Your Majesty speaks will return to England."

As a matter of fact, there was no proof that any considerable number of neutral vessels bearing English goods had entered Russian ports. Their principal harbor of refuge was Gothenburg, in southern Sweden, where the quays were piled high with English goods. From this point the merchandise by devious courses found its way to every part of the Continent. The closing of the Swedish ports would therefore cut the evil at the root, and Napoleon had even more cause for complaint against Bernadotte than he had against Alexander. The Czar himself was the first to call attention to this point. In November 1810 he said to Caulaincourt: "The real port of entry for English and contraband goods is Gothenburg; . . . it is this port which should be closed. If the arrival of the Prince de Ponte-Corvo deprives England of this outlet, a blow will be struck there which will really be felt in the City of London." [1]

At the time he made this statement, Alexander was far from thinking that Napoleon would take him at his word and demand his coöperation in closing Sweden. Therefore he was seriously embarrassed when he received Napoleon's request. He had no desire to increase the enemies of England, and wished to make friends of the Swedes. To him, the election of Bernadotte seemed likely to favor this plan.

After his arrival in Stockholm, the middle of October 1810, the Crown Prince had kept his promise to Napoleon so far as to go through the form of declaring war on England, but he had not ordered any confiscations of British goods. He took the first occasion to write the Czar, in warm terms, to express his desire to live on good terms with his neighbor.

This letter confirmed Alexander in his idea that it would not be difficult to transform this jealous lieutenant of Napoleon into a friend and adherent of Russia. While he was hesitating as to the best way of approaching the Crown Prince without arousing the suspicions of the Emperor, the letter of Napoleon

[1] Caulaincourt, 9 November 1810.

furnished him with a good excuse. During his visits to Vienna and Paris, Colonel Tchernitchef had acquired the friendship of Bernadotte, and had made up his mind that the marshal was jealous, and ill-disposed toward the Emperor. These impressions, he had confided to the Czar, who decided that this officer was just the emissary he wanted for his mission to the Crown Prince. Alexander accordingly entrusted him with the reply to Napoleon's letter, and ordered him to proceed to Paris by way of Stockholm. In his letter the Czar explains this détour with his usual art of dissimulation. He writes:

"Colonel Tchernitchef, having appeared to merit the approval of Your Majesty, I am sending him as the bearer of this letter. I am having him pass by way of Stockholm to inform the Swedish Government of your desire that I should support the demands made by you that Sweden shall break with England, although I have the news that this has already been done." [1]

On the surface, this letter seemed to fulfill all the obligations which Napoleon had imposed upon his ally. But we know by Tchernitchef's reports that he was charged to inform the Crown Prince confidentially that Sweden was free to take any action she thought best regarding England.

In his first private interview with Bernadotte, the Russian envoy saw that he could speak freely, and he stated without any reserve that Russia had no idea of constraining Sweden to act against her own best interests. These words seemed to lift a great weight from the mind of the Crown Prince, who made no effort to conceal his satisfaction.

Once started, with his Gascon effusion Bernadotte revealed his innermost thoughts to the envoy. He showed plainly his jealousy of the Emperor, whose greatest crime was that, having been a comrade, he had become a master. Before the interview was over, he assured Tchernitchef upon his "word of honor," in his own name and for the Swedish Government, that he would do nothing, under any circumstances, which could in the least degree displease His Majesty of All the

[1] Report of Tchernitchef, quoted 2 Vandal, 512.

Russias. "Become entirely a man of the North," his only desire was "to remain always united to Russia."

When Tchernitchef left for Paris, Bernadotte charged him with a letter to Napoleon, asking for further time in which to comply with the demands of the Emperor. He was not yet ready to break openly with Napoleon, and gave Tchernitchef as one of his reasons that "he was still forced to restrain himself because he was under the necessity of withdrawing the last *écu* of his possessions in France."

The final crisis in the alliance was reached on the 31 December 1810 when Russia abrogated the French treaty of the 11 January 1787, the only one ever concluded between the two countries, and which had been affirmed by one of the articles of the Peace of Tilsit. This treaty, one of the last and most successful acts of the Royal diplomacy, assured the entry into Russia of articles of French manufacture on a privileged basis, and subject only to very moderate duties.

Before there was time for the news of this infraction of the treaty to reach Paris, Napoleon, on the 22 January 1811, signed a decree ordering the annexation of Oldenburg to the Empire, and transferring the rights of the ducal family to Erfurt. This territory, which still remained in the hands of the Emperor, as part of the spoils of the campaign of Jena, was a sixth the size of the duchy, contained about a third the population, and had a revenue about one-half as large. The reigning duke, who strongly protested against this violation of his sovereign rights, was an uncle of the Czar, and his heir had married Alexander's sister, Catherine. This decree also was in violation of the conventions of Tilsit, which provided that the Duke of Oldenburg should be restored to "the full and peaceful possession of his States."

Both of these infractions of the treaty of Tilsit were without excuse, and neither Alexander nor Napoleon could plead that his action was taken by way of retaliation, for their acts were practically simultaneous. This time, the wrath of the two emperors was mute: it was not manifested by any outbreaks.

They both realized that the time for protests had passed, and, as they did not wish to precipitate a crisis, they continued to dissemble.

At this date, Napoleon was not yet ready for war. He had beyond the Rhine only the corps of Davout, about fifty thousand strong, which was dispersed throughout Northern Germany, and about the same number of Polish troops in the Grand Duchy. He was hoping from day to day to hear that the army of Wellington in Portugal had been forced to embark, and that he could at last withdraw a large part of his veteran troops from the Peninsula. His hopes, however, were doomed to bitter disappointment. Masséna was held up before the impregnable lines of Torres-Vedras, only a few miles north of Lisbon, and the situation was more discouraging than ever.

At this same moment, Russia was ready for war: her military preparations, which had been going on for many months, were entirely completed. According to figures given by Alexander himself,[1] with great secrecy he had succeeded in mobilizing and concentrating behind his western frontier 240,500 men, with 124,000 more in reserve. Magazines had been formed, provisions and ammunition brought together, and the army was prepared to enter Poland. Knowing Napoleon's state of unpreparedness, Alexander was strongly tempted to begin the inevitable struggle, and not give the Emperor time to assume the offensive. His plan was to overrun Poland, turn and isolate Dantzig, raise Prussia, and appear on the Oder with an army of 330,000 men, which would be raised to over half a million, "if Austria, in view of the advantages which would be offered her, should enter the game against France." [2] But the success of this plan depended upon the attitude of the Poles, who refused all of Alexander's propositions and remained faithful to Napoleon; therefore it was abandoned. It is idle now to speculate as to what the result might have been. In all probability, it would have been the campaign of 1813 in Germany, with the date set forward by two years, and with

[1] See 2 Czartoryski, 254, 271; also Joseph de Maistre, 3 *Mémoires*, 540.
[2] See 2 Czartoryski, 248–253.

every advantage in favor of Napoleon, before he had met with the irreparable losses of the disastrous Russian campaign.

No one ever knew his trade better than Napoleon, and it was difficult to deceive his vigilance for very long. As early as the month of December he had begun to get wind of the Russian preparations. From that moment, he quietly began his own preparations. His first step was to call to the colors the conscripts of 1811, which in a year would give him four hundred thousand troops ready for service. From this time on, his orders followed without interruption or delay. The three divisions of Davout were concentrated, and formed the nucleus of a new Army of Germany. The defences of Dantzig were strengthened, and war material of every kind was gathered there. But with all possible despatch, he could not be in position to meet the superior forces of Russia before the summer of 1811. Alexander failed, however, to take advantage of the opportunity of assuming the offensive, and passively awaited the coming shock behind his frontiers.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

### 1811

## THE RETURN OF CAULAINCOURT

Caulaincourt Recalled — Lauriston Succeeds Him — Napoleon's Pacific Instructions — Alexander Ready for War — He Hesitates to Attack — The Poles Faithful to Napoleon — The Other Powers Uncertain — The Czar's Plans Revealed — He Adopts a Fabian Policy — Caulaincourt Reaches Paris — Received by the Emperor — An Extraordinary Interview — Caulaincourt's Belief in Alexander — He Advocates the Alliance — He Reports the Russian Project to Avoid Battle — Napoleon Strongly Impressed — Caulaincourt's Remarkable Prediction of the Outcome of the War

IN THE spring of 1811, after three years of brilliant services, Caulaincourt finally obtained his recall. He was to be succeeded by another aide de camp of the Emperor, General de Lauriston, an old school companion of Napoleon at Brienne. Alexander expressed great regret at the departure of Caulaincourt, while at the same time speaking in high terms of his successor, whom he had met at Erfurt. In his letter of the 28 February, Napoleon had written: "I have endeavored to find the person who, I thought, would be the most agreeable to Your Majesty, and the best fitted to maintain the peace and the alliance between us . . . I am very anxious to learn that I have chosen well." [1] To this question the Czar replied affirmatively and with great good-will.

The new ambassador, Comte de Lauriston, received on the first of April the order to leave Paris, and to proceed to his post. His instructions directed him to say to the Czar that the Emperor would make war only under two contingencies: (1) If Russia signed a peace with England, or (2) if she claimed from the Turks an extension of territory beyond the Danube.[2]

[1] *Corresp.*, 17935.
[2] *Corresp.*, 17571.

Lauriston was followed by another letter, to be presented to the Czar, in which Napoleon made a strong appeal for a movement of expansion and of confidence: a frank explanation upon both parts, and a sincere attempt to reconcile their differences. For the first time, Napoleon admits that he is arming, and maintains that he has the right to do so, because "the news from Russia is not pacific." [1]

Napoleon continues: "This is a repetition of what I saw in 1807 [1806] in Prussia, and in 1809 in Austria. As for myself, I shall remain personally the friend of Your Majesty, even if that fatality which impels Europe should one day put arms in the hands of our two peoples. I shall not be governed by what Your Majesty may do; I shall never attack, and my troops will never advance until Your Majesty has torn up the treaty of Tilsit."

At the beginning of 1811, Alexander had made all his arrangements to set his troops in motion against Napoleon. His pretext was the annexation of Oldenburg to the French Empire, but his real reason was the fear that Napoleon, having created, and enlarged, the Duchy of Warsaw, wished to re-establish the ancient Kingdom of Poland. In order to avert this peril, as already stated, he had formed the plan of restoring Poland for his own benefit; and through Czartoryski he had proposed to the Poles to transform the Grand-Duchy into a Kingdom united to his Empire. Much to his surprise, all of his offers were disdainfully rejected: "Elsewhere, Napoleon rules by force, and only controls the bodies; at Warsaw, he reigns over the hearts." [2] It would have been easy for the large Russian army to overrun the duchy, and crush the small Polish forces, but this would delay the invasion, and give Napoleon time to concentrate his troops for the defence of the line of the Oder.

The Czar also hesitated to begin hostilities without feeling sure that the far-extended flanks of his Empire were safe from attack. It was important to ascertain the attitude of Sweden

[1] *Corresp.*, 17579.
[2] 3 Vandal, 5.

and Turkey. He could not afford to withdraw his army from Finland, recently conquered and annexed, without the assurance that the Swedes would not assume the offensive. In December 1810, Bernadotte had thrice given his "word of honor" that he would never declare against Russia, but Alexander had little confidence in this former marshal of the Empire. Furthermore, the Crown Prince was not yet the absolute master in his State, and King Charles was known to be friendly to France.

On the other flank, the war with the Turks continued to occupy a part of the Russian forces, although the Sultan, drained of men and money, did not seem in a position to be a serious menace. Nevertheless, Alexander was anxious to be rid of this adversary, who was more annoying than dangerous.

Without the complicity of Austria, also, the great plan would be in danger of failure. As the Russians advanced toward the Rhine, they would expose their flank to Austria, who could debouch from the Bohemian mountains, and cause a disaster. After a long sojourn in Paris, Metternich had returned to Vienna, where he refused to listen to the Russian offers.

At the end of January, when Alexander wrote his friend Czartoryski that he had 240,500 troops ready to open the campaign, with 124,000 more in reserve, he swore to Caulaincourt that "he had not an extra bayonet in his ranks"! These assurances he repeated over and over again. He was a past-master in the art of dissimulation, and Caulaincourt believed to the last in his sincerity. "I conceal nothing, and I have nothing to conceal," he repeated frequently, and this alone should have put the ambassador on his guard. *Qui s'excuse, s'accuse!*

The first of March, the Russian troops were all ready to begin the invasion of Poland. At this moment, Alexander received the most discouraging news: Czartoryski wrote that the commanders of the Polish army and all of the principal magnates were absolutely faithful to Napoleon,

At the same time, Metternich wrote that any violation of

Austrian territory would be considered "as a declaration of war," and that the concentration of Russian troops on the frontier of Galicia would "end in forcing the Emperor of Austria himself to mobilize his armies and place them upon a war-footing." [1]

Bad news also came from Stockholm, where Bernadotte was reported to be on intimate terms with Alquier, the French minister. In Prussia, the King displayed more good-will than energy, and refused to make a move unless seconded by Austria. In short, on all sides Alexander saw unexpected obstacles develop, and bar his route: his resolve to take the offensive was followed by a period of uncertainty. Without entirely giving up his plan, he postponed for the moment its execution.

At this time, France was represented at Warsaw by a new minister, named Bignon, a very active man, full of intelligence and zeal, devoted to the service of the Emperor. The last of March, Bignon had two long interviews with Poniatowski, who divulged to him the secret projects of the Czar. The prince declined to reveal the sources of his information, but it is certain that he had been approached by the emissaries of Alexander. In a series of almost daily despatches, Bignon communicated to his Government all these new developments.

Meanwhile, Alexander, discouraged by so many obstacles to his plans, was becoming more and more inclined to look for safety in a systematic defensive. He recalled the words of Barclay, after Eylau: "If I were the commander-in-chief, I should avoid a decisive battle and retire, so that the French, instead of finding a victory, would end by finding a second Pultava." In this spring of 1811, Wellington had furnished a striking example of this Fabian policy, by withdrawing before Masséna in southern Portugal, until he found refuge behind the impregnable lines of Torres-Vedras. The military art is strongly imitative, and this policy was then highly regarded among strategists. At Saint Petersburg, this doctrine was formulated under the pen of a German in the Russian serv-

[1] 2 Metternich, 418–419.

ice, General Pfuhl, a brilliant student of the art of war, who excelled in cabinet strategy, but failed in practice. His plan made a strong impression on Alexander, who was now inclined to adopt a purely defensive policy.

Leaving Saint Petersburg on the 15 May, Caulaincourt arrived in Paris early on the morning of the 5 June. He traversed the city, which was in gala attire for the baptism of the King of Rome, and presented himself at Saint-Cloud, where the Court had been in residence for several weeks. He was immediately received by the Emperor in his cabinet, and there ensued a most remarkable interview, the story of which is related in very minute detail in some unpublished memoirs left by the ambassador.

The Emperor's greeting was very cold. He immediately began to speak of his grievances against Alexander: his abandonment in 1809, his infractions of the blockade, his armaments. "Alexander is false," he cried; "he is arming to attack me."

With great courage, Caulaincourt pleaded the innocence of Alexander and the loyalty of his intentions. He enumerated the services rendered by the Czar, the provocations to which he had been subjected. Napoleon listened with growing impatience. Finally, when Caulaincourt asserted that the Polish offensive was a "ridiculous tale," the Emperor could no longer contain himself: "You are a dupe," he said; "you have not known what was going on. Davout and Rapp have kept me better informed." Nevertheless, Caulaincourt, at that moment, was nearer correct in his diagnosis of the situation than the Emperor: Alexander *had* planned to take the offensive, but he was *now* anxious to avert the war. The ex-ambassador continued to express his convictions with so much warmth, and with such evident sincerity, that Napoleon began to be troubled and uncertain. He broke off the conversation, and began to pace the room, absorbed in his reflections. A quarter of an hour passed thus, in complete silence. Then Napoleon approached Caulaincourt, and said:

"You believe then that Russia does not want war, that she will remain in the alliance, and will reënter the Continental System, if I satisfy her regarding Poland?"

In reply, Caulaincourt repeated what he had stated in his despatches; and, when pressed to formulate definitely what would satisfy the Czar in regard to Poland, said that a partial evacuation, of Dantzig and the strong-places in Prussia, would help the situation. But this idea, before an understanding was reached, did not meet with the Emperor's approval.

Returning a little later to the principal question, Caulaincourt maintained that the time had come for the Emperor to adopt one or the other of two courses which were possible: Either to reassure Russia, by giving an effective guarantee that he would never reëstablish Poland; or, to reconstitute Poland entirely, by completing the work begun in 1807 and continued in 1809. The first course, if adopted, would avert the war, the second, would make it certain, but would furnish an object for which it would be worth while to fight. Each of these plans had its advantages and its disadvantages, but the time had come when it was necessary frankly to choose between them. His words were only a paraphrase of what he had written in one of his last despatches (8 May): "The Emperor must choose between Poland and Russia, for matters have come to a point where, not to disillusion the one, is to lose the other."

"What course would *you* take?" demanded the Emperor.

"Alliance, prudence, and peace."

"Peace! It must be durable and honorable. I do not want a peace like that of Amiens which ruins my commerce. In order that the peace may be durable, it is necessary that England be convinced that she can find no more auxiliaries upon the Continent."

"Your Majesty then is inclined toward Poland?"

These words arrested the Emperor, and again renewed his perplexity. Poland, feeble and uncertain, would indeed be a fragile barrier, a rampart of sand, against the power of the colossus of the North.

"I do not want war," said Napoleon; "I do not want Poland, but I want the alliance to be useful to me: . . . it has never been so."

Caulaincourt once more asserted his belief in the sincerity of Alexander, and spoke with so much warmth and conviction that the Emperor was visibly moved.

The ambassador felt encouraged to drive home his argument. At great length, he explained that all the acts of the Emperor since 1808 had led the Czar to fear new *bouleversements*.

"Mais quoi!" cried Napoleon; "what designs do they attribute to me? What can I desire? Is not France great enough?"

The conversation then wandered into a retrospective discussion, which continued for hours.

Again changing the subject, Napoleon began to speak of the Russians. He maintained that the noblesse, corrupt and selfish, after one or two battles lost, as soon as they felt the effects of the invasion, would force the sovereign to sign peace. "Your Majesty is entirely mistaken," said Caulaincourt, boldly. He dared to tell Napoleon that he entirely underrated the defensive strength of the nation. He pointed out what a war in the North would mean, and unveiled in advance its sombre horrors. "In Russia," he said, "they have no illusions regarding the genius of their adversary and his prodigious resources; they know that they will have to encounter a great winner of battles; but they also know that their country is vast, that there is room to retire, and give up territory; they know, Sire, that it will be to their advantage to draw you into the interior, and to place you at a distance from France and your source of supplies. Your Majesty cannot be everywhere; they will strike only where you are not present. It will not be a war of a day. At the end of a certain time, it will be necessary for Your Majesty to return to France: then all the advantages will pass to the other side. Besides, you must take into account the winter, a most severe climate, and above all, a fixed determination never to yield."

As a supreme argument, the ambassador quoted the final words of Alexander, when he made his adieux:

"If the Emperor Napoleon makes war on me, it is possible, even probable, that he will defeat us if we accept the conflict, but that will not give him peace. The Spaniards have been beaten frequently, but they are neither vanquished nor submissive: furthermore, they are not so distant from Paris, and they have neither our climate nor our resources. We shall not compromise ourselves; we have a space behind us, and we shall keep a well-organized army. With that, one is never forced to accept peace, no matter what reverse is experienced: one compels his vanquisher to accept it. The Emperor Napoleon made this remark to Tchernitchef after Wagram: he admitted himself that he would never have consented to treat with Austria if she had not been able to conserve her army; with more persistence the Austrians would have obtained better conditions. The Emperor must obtain results as prompt as his thoughts are quick: he will never secure them with us. I shall profit from his lessons: they are those of a master. We shall let our climate, our winter, make war for us. The French are brave, but less stubborn than our soldiers: they become discouraged more easily. There will be no prodigies performed except where the Emperor is present: he cannot be everywhere; besides, he will be forced to return to his States. I will not be the first to draw the sword, but I shall be the last to sheathe it. I will retire to Kamchatka rather than cede provinces or sign in my conquered capital a peace which will only be a truce."

While Caulaincourt was speaking, a marked and increasing amazement was depicted on the countenance of the Emperor. He listened to the end, without losing a word, "as if the veil of the future were withdrawn before his eyes, as if a flash of lightning had revealed the precipice yawning at his feet: he seemed moved, stricken to the bottom of his soul." Caulaincourt felt that he had produced a strong effect, and won his cause. Far from being offended, the Emperor seemed to appreciate his frankness. Napoleon's attitude had changed: his face, which had been hard and cold, became open and kindly. For the first time, he thanked Caulaincourt for his

zeal, his devotion; and was amiable and familiar. He admitted that the resources of Russia were great, but added that his own were immense. "Bah! A good battle will take the measure of the fine determinations of your friend Alexander and his sand forts." His last words were an allusion to the lines of defence constructed by the Russians between the Dnieper and the Dwina.

They had been together since midday. The daylight was fading: without, in the park, the rays of the setting sun were touching the tops of the trees, and the cabinet was shrouded in gloom, but the Emperor still talked. Finally, after a pause, he said: "It is the Austrian marriage which has embroiled us: Alexander was offended because I did not marry his sister." A strange statement, to Caulaincourt, who knew all the facts! Then he corrected himself, with the assertion, which could not be denied: "Nevertheless it is certain that they are upset at Petersburg by our *rapprochement* with Austria."

Finally, Napoleon intimated that he was tired out. Notwithstanding this *congé*, Caulaincourt asked permission to make a final observation, and the Emperor told him to speak.

"War and peace are in the hands of Your Majesty. For your own happiness and the welfare of France, I implore you to reflect that you are about to make a choice between the drawbacks of the first and the certain advantages of the second."

"You talk like a Russian," said Napoleon, severely.

"No, Sire; like a good Frenchman; like a faithful servant of Your Majesty."

"I do not desire war, but I cannot prevent the Poles from wanting me and calling me."

Then he went on to say that the Poles in the Russian provinces only awaited a sign from him to rise in revolt. The ambassador maintained that Napoleon was entirely mistaken, and continued audaciously: "Your Majesty cannot deny the fact that they know too well now in Europe that you want nations more for yourself than for their own interests."

"You believe that, Sir?"

"Yes, Sire."

"You do not spoil me," replied the Emperor in a tone of pique; "it is dinner time." And he retired.

The interview had lasted seven hours. Never had Napoleon listened to such words: never had the danger before him been so clearly indicated. But, while the ambassador was correct on many points, on many others, he was entirely wrong. His faith in the sincerity and good-will of Alexander was without the slightest foundations. Even the sacrifice of Poland would not have brought about an effective coöperation against England, and made the Czar a faithful ally. Nevertheless, if Napoleon had been willing to moderate the demands of his Continental System, to accept peace without an alliance, he might have avoided the fatal conflict, for Alexander, although tired of the alliance, certainly did not desire war. In any event, it would have been a thousand times better for Napoleon to await the war, if inevitable; to let the enemy issue from his frontiers and attack, rather than to go in search of him in these deserts of the North, where more than one illustrious career had already found its tomb. Where Caulaincourt had most clearly shown his wisdom and foresight was in pointing out the dangers and difficulties of an offensive campaign, the disasters which lurked in this course. His predictions of the probable outcome of the Russian campaign were so exact, so definite in all particulars, as to recall the celebrated prophecy of Cazotte at the beginning of the French Revolution. If it were not for the reputation of Monsieur de Caulaincourt as a man of the highest honor and integrity, one would imagine that he, too, was a prophet after the fact, — in other words, that his *Mémoires* were composed in the light of after-events.[1]

[1] This narration of the interview between Napoleon and Caulaincourt is based upon the account in the history of *Napoléon et Alexandre 1er* by M. Albert Vandal, who had access to a very valuable collection of unpublished documents in the possession of the Caulaincourt family. See 3 Vandal, 175–191.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

### 1812

## THE WAR WITH RUSSIA

Napoleon, First Creditor of Prussia — The Franco-Prussian Treaty — New Overtures to the Czar — Treason of Michel — Treaty with Austria — Sweden Allied with Russia — The Czar's Ultimatum — Napoleon Detained by the Bread Famine — A Quiet Month — Departure for Dresden — Arrival of the Austrian Sovereigns — Napoleon Fails to Win the Empress — The King of Prussia and His Son — Real Object of the Meeting — All Negotiations Fail — The Russian Campaign — The Tactics — Enormous Difficulties — Errors of Napoleon — Borodino — Moscow — The City Burned — Napoleon's Fatal Delay — His Army Destroyed — He Leaves for Paris — His Letters — The Malet Plot — The Empress Moves to Paris — Return of Napoleon

THERE has recently been published in Paris a little book entitled *Napoleon, the First Creditor of Prussia*, in which it is stated that, although the Emperor occupied the whole of Prussia with his armies for several years, he never succeeded in collecting the indemnity agreed on in the Treaty of Tilsit. The Prussians were as successful in evading payment as are their descendants of to-day. A new convention was signed in 1808, but Frederick-William again managed to put the matter off, in the hope that Austria would defeat France. After Wagram, Hardenberg consented "in principle" to pay in bonds and in kind for the evacuation of Prussia by the French troops, but the Spanish war forced Napoleon to withdraw most of his army, and once more payment was avoided. It was not until 1812, therefore, that Napoleon succeeded in collecting some small part of his claim in provisions and transportation for his troops passing through Germany.

On the 24 February 1812, a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, was concluded between France and Prussia, under which the King engaged to furnish a contingent of twenty

thousand men and sixty cannon, in case of war with Russia.[1] Napoleon placed but little confidence in this alliance, and seems to have taken these troops more as hostages than anything else.

The day after this treaty was signed, Napoleon sent for Colonel Tchernitchef, and in a very conciliatory interview insisted upon knowing the real grievances of Russia. "The more I reflect upon it," he said, "the less I can reconcile myself to the idea that a war can break out between the Emperor Alexander and myself."

The colonel stated the complaints of the Czar, as he understood them. They were principally two: First, the supposed intention of Napoleon to reëstablish the Kingdom of Poland; Second, the occupation of the Duchy of Oldenburg.

On the first point, Napoleon said that he had no intention of reëstablishing Poland, that he had given his word to that effect, and would renew it. As to Oldenburg, his action was dictated by the necessity of closing a port of entry for English goods, and he had offered, by way of indemnity, to give an equivalent territory to the rulers. In turn he complained of the failure of Russia to exclude English commerce, and the discrimination against French goods. "After all," he said, "these discussions are not worth a cannon-shot. Return to the Emperor Alexander, and give him this letter. Tell him, above all, that I pray him not to postpone longer the negotiations which should put an end to these misunderstandings."

The letter of the Emperor was brief, but polite; it was mainly a repetition of his verbal assurances. "I have taken the course," he said, "of talking over with Colonel Tchernitchef the disquieting affairs which have arisen during the past fifteen months. It only depends upon Your Majesty to end them all. I beg Your Majesty never to doubt my desire to give him proofs of the distinguished consideration which I have for his person." [2]

Armed with this letter, which was equivalent to a dismissal,

[1] 2 De Clercq, 354–359
[2] *Corresp.*, 18523.

the colonel made his preparations to depart, and only remained a few hours in Paris. Knowing that he was under suspicion, because of his efforts to obtain information regarding the new organization of the Grand Army, before leaving he destroyed a large number of papers. This precaution was not superuflous, for he had hardly vacated his apartment before it was visited by the police. In the fireplace of his bedroom were found the ashes of burnt papers. In making their search, the police removed a rug before the mantel, and under it they found a letter which had escaped destruction, signed only with the initial *M*. This communication proved conclusively that Tchernitchef was a spy, and put the police upon the track of the French traitor. Suspicion was at once directed to a man named Michel, who was employed as a copyist in the War Office. It was not difficult to secure a page in his handwriting, and a comparison with the letter left no doubts as to the identity of the criminal. An hour later Michel was arrested, confronted with the evidence against him, and confessed his guilt. It was found, on further investigation, that these treasonable practices, conducted by Russian agents, had been going on for eight or nine years, and had not been interrupted even by the alliance of 1807. The ambassadors apparently were not involved, but there was always some one on their staff who was engaged in this odious traffic. From reasons of public policy, the matter was kept quiet for several weeks, but in April, Michel was put on trial for high treason, condemned, and executed.[1]

Austria would have preferred to remain neutral in the coming conflict, but this was impossible, and she was forced to yield to the demands of the Emperor. On the 14 March, a treaty was signed, under which Francis agreed to furnish thirty thousand men, including six thousand cavalry. As in the case of Prussia, it was stipulated that these troops were not to be sent to Spain.[2] Such were the benefits of the Austrian marriage!

[1] *Cf.* 5 Rovigo, 213; 1 Pasquier, 518–519; and Ernouf, 345–347.

[2] See 2 De Clercq, 369–372

In signing this treaty, Napoleon and Francis agreed with each other that it should be kept a secret as long as possible; but it was revealed inopportunely by an Austrian envoy. The Emperor Francis was then represented at Stockholm by Comte de Neipperg, the man who was to cause Marie-Louise to forget Napoleon, and thus become known to History. Informed of the treaty, Neipperg took it upon himself to communicate it officially to the Swedish Government, and of course it was immediately known at Saint Petersburg.[1]

This news produced a profound impression upon the Czar. Knowing the state of slavery in which Prussia existed, he had long given up hopes of any assistance from that Power, but up to the last he had relied upon the neutrality, at least, of Austria. Without causing Alexander to weaken, or feel more disposed to make peace, this bitter news led him finally to adopt the plan of an absolute defensive. With Austria in alliance with France, an advance into Poland would expose his army to a flank attack. Therefore, upon his arrival at Wilna, he gave his final orders to await the attack within the Russian frontiers. This resolution, which was destined to save Russia, was definitely reached by Alexander only at the last hour, and was due entirely to reasons beyond his control. The very measure taken by Napoleon to render his success certain, was to be the main cause of his failure. If the Russians had advanced to the Vistula, as Alexander proposed up to the last moment, a conflict with the superior French forces would have resulted in certain disaster.

The negotiations, conducted at the same time, for an alliance with Sweden, were complicated by an unfortunate act of Marshal Davout. Through an excess of zeal, in January, he sent some of his troops to take possession of the island of Rugen, in Swedish Pomerania, in order to prevent the landing of British goods. Bernadotte, whose decision was already made, used this violation of his territory as a pretext for throwing himself into the arms of Alexander. On the 24 March he signed a treaty with Russia, in which he agreed to

[1] See 3 Vandal, 374.

furnish thirty thousand troops. The price of his treason to his native land was to be Norway, which would be seized from Denmark.

On the 27 April, Kourakine asked for an audience: he brought the reply of the Czar to Napoleon's latest pacific overtures. As a basis for any further negotiations, Alexander demanded: (1) The entire evacuation of Prussia; (2) a reduction in the garrison of Dantzig; (3) the evacuation of Swedish Pomerania; and (4), a satisfactory arrangement with Sweden. Such arrogant demands clearly showed that the Czar was decided upon war, and had no desire for further negotiations. But Napoleon, in order to gain a little more time, sent his aide de camp, Narbonne, to Russia, with another message to Alexander.[1] He also, for the fourth time, offered peace to England, but the Government again replied that it could only treat on the basis of the recognition of Ferdinand the Seventh.

At the same moment that the Russian ambassador was delivering his ultimatum to Napoleon, Alexander left his capital for the headquarters of his army at Wilna, where he arrived on the 28 April.

On the first day of May, the Grand Army was concentrated behind the Vistula, ready to enter Russia, but Napoleon was still detained at Paris by an unforeseen difficulty, which was destined to have a disastrous effect upon his chances for success. The 1811 crops in France had been a failure, and during the following winter the price of bread had become so dear as to cause great privation among the poor. The evils of an intensely centralized government were never more apparent than on this occasion, when Napoleon was forced to postpone his departure for a month in order to direct personally the work of relief.[2]

At this time Marie-Louise wrote her father: "The Emperor charges me to give you his best regards, and to assure you, if there is a war one of these days, he will take me with him to

[1] *Corresp.*, 18669.
[2] See 1 Pasquier, 497–509.

Dresden, where I shall remain a month or two, and where he hopes also to see you. You cannot conceive, my dear Papa, the joy which this prospect gives me. I am sure that you will not refuse my request, and that you will also give me the pleasure of bringing with you Mama and my brothers and sisters, that I may also have the privilege of seeing them. I ask you, my very dear Papa, not to speak of this plan, because nothing is yet settled." [1]

However, everything was so fully decided that, on the 30 March, the Emperor departed for Saint-Cloud with the Empress, in order to secure a little rest, although they were forced to leave the King, who was ill, behind them at the Élysée. Their life during the following month was very tranquil, the Emperor spending as much time as possible in the open air. Several mornings he aroused the Empress at dawn, to ride with him, either in the park, or to visit the work going on at Paris.

Finally, on the 9 May, without returning to Paris, without any proclamation to the nation or message to the Senate, the Emperor left Saint-Cloud under the pretext "of going on a tour of inspection to the Grand Army assembled upon the Vistula." [2] On the eve of every other campaign, from Marengo to Wagram, Napoleon had given his reasons, and published the documents which explained his course. This time — nothing. And by way of a "curtain-raiser" to this war, the most dangerous he has ever undertaken, he has arranged for a fortnight of fêtes at Dresden, where he conducts the Empress, and where he has invited to meet him and do him homage all his allies and vassals. "Never had a departure for the army so much resembled a pleasure trip."

The visit to Dresden [3] was probably the happiest moment in the life of Marie-Louise. With full confidence in the prestige of Napoleon, she regarded victory as certain; no doubts of the future troubled her. Not yet twenty years of age, she looked

[1] Masson, *Marie-Louise*, 376.
[2] *Moniteur*, 10 May 1812.
[3] See Masson, *Marie-Louise*, 381–393; 3 Vandal, 402–455.

forward to meeting again the members of her family, and appearing before them in all the éclat of her glory as Empress of the French.

She left Saint-Cloud at six o'clock on the morning of the 9 May, with the Emperor, in the new travelling coach built for him the previous year, the same one afterwards captured by the Prussians at Waterloo, and now in the collection of Mme. Tussaud at London.[1] They had no military escort, but were accompanied by a suite of thirty-eight persons. Out of consideration for the Empress, the journey was made by easy stages, stopping for the nights at Châlons, Metz, Mayence, Würzburg, Baireuth, and Plauen. They were met at Freiberg by the King and Queen of Saxony, who escorted them to Dresden, where they arrived at eleven o'clock on the night of the 16 May, and were lodged in the royal palace in the former apartments of Augustus the Second, King of Poland and Elector of Saxony. The whole city was illuminated, the garrison was under arms, cannon were fired and bells rung. At the palace, the royal family and the entire Court were gathered to salute the Emperor.

The next day, there arrived the Grand Duke of Würzburg and the Queen of Westphalia, followed, twenty-four hours later, by the Emperor and Empress of Austria, whom Marie-Louise had not seen since her marriage two years before. Francis had come much against his inclination, and his wife, "notoriously hostile to Napoleon," assumed the posture of a victim led to the slaughter. She could neither forgive nor forget the injuries of Napoleon, and was exasperated to see the splendors of her step-daughter. The rather fulsome flatteries of the Saxon Court to Napoleon only aggravated the situation.

In vain Napoleon employed all his powers of fascination to overcome the hostility of his mother-in-law. At the table, he ordered that she should be given the place of honor, with Louise at her left, and the Emperor Francis next to his daughter, while he himself sat at the right of Béatrice. If she had

[1] See the author's *Napoleon the First*, 176.

always hated Napoleon, she now learned to detest her step-daughter, if possible, even more. The Austrian courtiers found Louise much improved. "Her figure," they said, "has become very elegant; she has now the prettiest form in the world, and a charming little foot." Besides, nothing could be more brilliant than her suite: she had, they said, one hundred and fifty attendants, while the Emperor Francis had only two! Then, to cap the climax, there were her robes and her jewels. Napoleon tried to have Louise show more moderation in her toilettes, but finally ended on every occasion by yielding to his wife's tears. She took a childish pleasure in outshining her step-mother.

All the advantages which Napoleon had hoped to gain from this interview with the Emperor Francis were nullified by this little woman, who ruled her husband absolutely. Learning, much to her dismay, that Francis proposed to command in person the Austrian contingent, and make the campaign with Napoleon, she opposed this plan with all her force. She finally appealed to Metternich, who took her part, and the project was abandoned.

This little domestic drama passed almost unperceived in the midst of the daily fêtes, the promenades in carriages, the hunting-parties, the banquets, the spectacles, the concerts, in which took part "Saxony, Prussia, Weimar, Mecklenburg, Coburg, Reuss — all grovelling on their knees before their mortal enemy."

On the 26 May, the King of Prussia arrived, followed by his son, the Prince Royal, for whom the King solicited the position of aide de camp on the staff of Napoleon. At the same time Ferdinand asked the Emperor to give his brother, Don Carlos, the command of the Spanish troops who were going to Russia. When we think of all this servility, it is not remarkable that Napoleon believed in the sincerity and devotion of his allies. It was not, as often stated, solely for the satisfaction of his *amour-propre* that the Emperor had convoked this gathering of his crowned vassals. Conserving even to the last minute the hope of averting the war, Napoleon

imagined that the Czar might be impressed by the menace of this formidable coalition, and brought back to more pacific ideas. But Alexander knew better than Napoleon the worth of these alliances and the sincerity of these homages.

On his arrival at Wilna, Comte de Narbonne tried in vain to reopen the negotiations: Alexander was cold and inflexible. Lauriston, who was sent later, could not even obtain an interview. On the 29 May, Alexander published a decree opening all the ports of Russia to the commerce of all nations, and the same day Napoleon left Dresden to place himself at the head of his armies.

Although many volumes have been written on the Russian Campaign, there still exists much misinformation on the subject. The strategy so successfully employed by the Russians was due to circumstances rather than any preconceived plan. With an army of less than 250,000 men they were forced to meet more than 500,000 invaders under the greatest captain of modern times. Nevertheless, the Russian commanders expected to fight, and the defensive tactics adopted were the result of the overwhelming superiority of the French forces.[1]

The size of Napoleon's army, paradoxical as this may seem, was one of the principal causes of his failure. He would have done better if he had left a large part of his forces in reserve behind the Niemen. There were no roads worthy of the name in Russia, and it was physically impossible to supply such an enormous host. There were too many wagons, and far too many camp-followers — especially the notorious "love escort," tolerated in the armies of the Republic and the Empire. From the very outset, the success of the campaign was jeopardized by the impedimenta.[2] Knowing that this war was not to be fought in a fertile land, like the valleys of the Po and the Danube, where the soldiers could live off the country, Napoleon had organized his transportation on the largest scale. Supplies had been drawn from every possible source, and nothing was neglected for the comfort of his men. Na-

[1] *Cf.* 3 Vandal, 493.
[2] *Cf.* 3 Vandal, 233.

poleon never forgot his maxim that "an army marches on its belly."

The first important battle was fought on the 17 August at Smolensk; the Russians under Barclay were defeated, but escaped destruction, and continued their retreat eastward. At Dresden, Napoleon had told Metternich that he did not intend to go beyond this point in the campaign of 1812.[1] The city lies on the south bank of the Dnieper, in a beautiful amphitheatre of hills. It was a "sacred city," one of the oldest in Russia, and had at one time contained eighty thousand inhabitants, but had dwindled to not more than a quarter that number. At this point, about halfway from Wilna to Moscow, Napoleon should have paused, as he first proposed, and put his army in winter quarters. As he was drawing supplies from the richest part of the Empire, the Russians would sooner or later have been obliged to advance and attack him. Leaving his army there, Napoleon could personally have returned to France, obtained new recruits, organized a better system of supplies, and renewed the campaign in 1813 with every chance of success. To continue the advance to Moscow was to court disaster. It is difficult to agree with such eminent authorities as Jomini and Clausewitz, who approve of Napoleon's final decision as his only proper course.[2]

Continuing his pursuit, on the 5 September Napoleon came up with the Russians, who were posted in a strong position at Borodino. Dissatisfied with the Fabian tactics of Barclay, Alexander had appointed Kutusov to succeed him, with orders to fight at the first opportunity. In the battle which followed two days later, Kutusov was decisively defeated, and retreated to Moscow, sixty miles away. The losses on both sides were enormous, and Napoleon was in no condition to conduct an active pursuit. He has been sharply criticized by many military writers for not putting in the Guard at the decisive moment, about the middle of the afternoon. This superb body of picked troops, still twenty thousand strong, might

[1] See 1 Metternich, 122; 12 Thiers, 459–460.
[2] See 3 Jomini, 371–372.

have made Borodino a crushing Russian defeat, and forced the Czar to sue for peace. But Napoleon was two thousand miles from home, and the Guard his last reserve: if they were repulsed, his whole army would have been a flying mob in less than an hour. That his decision was wise is proved by the fact that it was the Old Guard who covered his retreat, and saved the entire army from destruction.[1]

The Russians made no attempt to defend Moscow, which was occupied by the French on the 14 September. Fires broke out the first night, and before the flames could be controlled two-thirds of the wooden houses, of which the city was built, had been consumed. According to popular tradition the Russians themselves deliberately set fire to their capital, but the conflagration was probably due to the carelessness of the soldiers who were pillaging the city.

It was at this time that Napoleon made the most fatal error of this disastrous campaign. After the fire he should have begun his retreat at once, but he could not make up his mind to face defeat. He therefore tarried in Moscow a whole month, hoping from day to day that Alexander would sue for peace. On the 19 October he finally left Moscow, directing his army toward Kaluga, whence he expected to take a new southerly route toward Smolensk. But, finding the Russian army in his path, he gave up this project and returned by the former route, through the region already devastated by his army. Three weeks after leaving Moscow, the Russian winter set in, with all its rigors, and the army suffered terribly, nearly all of the horses being lost. Just before reaching Wilna, on the 5 December, Napoleon turned the command over to Murat and started for France. Travelling rapidly, night and day, and only stopping for a few hours at Dresden, he reached the Tuileries at eleven o'clock on the night of the 18 December.

Five days after the departure of the Emperor from Dresden, on the 4 June, Marie-Louise left for Prague to pass a few weeks with her family. Then, after a short visit to her uncle at

[1] See 3 Jomini, 397–399. Clausewitz also justifies Napoleon's caution in withholding his Guard — 2 Rose, 236, note.

Würzburg, she returned to Saint-Cloud, where she arrived on the 18 July. Here she passed the summer very quietly, almost all the time alone with Mme. de Montebello. She wrote the Emperor nearly every day, and heard from him by every courier, but none of this correspondence has been preserved except two letters of Napoleon which were intercepted by the Russian scouts. From Moscow, on the 16 October, he wrote:

"Ma bonne amie, I have received your letter of the 29 [? — September]. All the good news which I have of you from every side gives me much pleasure. I see that you have the secret of making every one happy. It seems to me that the Parisians are very fond of you: they would be very difficult if they were not. I hope that you are content with the little King. If I cannot return to Paris this winter, I shall have you come to see me in Poland . . ."

The second letter was from Smolensk, under date of 11 November:

"Ma bonne amie, You perceive that we are many days nearer each other . . . The weather is cold, 40 degrees; the ground covered with snow. I am thinking of you. I would love to see you. Your father should soon . . . [*illegible*], for you know how tenderly I love you. Kiss my son." [1]

These are far from the passionate letters addressed to Joséphine, in the days of the Campaign of Italy: not a word even about the war, and the disastrous failure of the invasion. This, however, was natural, as he did not wish to alarm Marie-Louise, and he had written in the same way to Joséphine three years before, after his repulse at Essling.

In October, a false report of the Emperor's death enabled General Malet to make a bold bid for power, and he very nearly succeeded. The seriousness of the conspiracy was concealed from Marie-Louise, who was not even alarmed. But the fragility of the Imperial edifice was exposed. "What!" cried Napoleon, with unfeigned indignation, "is one man everything here? Are institutions and pledged loyalty nothing?"

[1] Masson, 408–409.

They were indeed but shadows: Napoleon was everything, but he was alone!

The Court remained at Saint-Cloud much later than usual, for every one was awaiting orders from the Emperor, which he could not give: during the retreat he remained for three weeks without news from Paris. In this summer château the cold was so intense that it was impossible to warm the chambers. The first of December, however, it was necessary to return to Paris for the fête of the Coronation, which this year was celebrated very quietly on account of the general anxiety. On the 17 December the *Moniteur* published the famous Twenty-ninth Bulletin, in which the Emperor revealed frankly the immensity of the disaster. The following evening, Marie-Louise had just gone to bed when a noise was heard in the adjoining salon. At the same moment the door opened, and a man enveloped in furs entered. Marie-Louise uttered a cry of terror, tried to rush from the room, and found herself in the arms of her husband!

## CHAPTER THIRTY

### 1813

## THE REGENCY

Effects of the Malet Conspiracy — The Advantages of the Monarchy — Napoleon's Apprehensions for His Dynasty — His Plans for a Regency — Search for Precedents — Brochures on the Coronation and Regency — Napoleon Visits the Pope at Fontainebleau — Previous Steps Toward a Reconciliation — The Emperor Cordially Received — A New Concordat Signed — Napoleon's Concessions — His Object — Plans for the Coronation — The Date Put Off — The Pope Breaks His Word — The Empress Invested — Napoleon's Strenuous Efforts — He Raises a New Army — Life of the Court — Unpopularity of Marie-Louise — Her Dependence on Napoleon — Sojourns at Trianon and the Élysée

DURING the first days after his return to Paris, Napoleon seems to have been troubled less by the loss of his army than by the blow to his dynasty: this is the first, the only thought which preoccupies him. The false report of his death had been sufficient to shake the Imperial edifice upon its foundations. All his efforts of the past three years had been in vain: the sacrifice of Joséphine, the Austrian marriage, the birth of an heir to his throne. His first formal declaration, two days after his return, is all consecrated to this subject. In reply to the address of the Senate, he says:

"The glory and the power of France are close to my heart; but my first thoughts are for that which can perpetuate internal tranquillity and render my people immune from the strife of factions and the horrors of anarchy. It is against these foes of popular welfare that I have founded, with the will and the love of the French, this throne to which are now linked the destinies of the Fatherland . . . Our fathers had for a rallying cry: *Le Roi est mort, Vive le Roi!* These few words sum up the principal advantages of the Monarchy. I believe that I have well studied the spirit that my people have shown through the different centuries. I have reflected

upon what has been done at different epochs in our history; I shall give the matter further thought."

These words strike the key-note of his future program, which had as a basis two fundamental principles: paternal love and the perpetuation of the Empire. When the Malet conspirators announced the death of the Emperor, not a voice in Paris was raised to cry: "Long live the Emperor!" No one had thought of his son, the King of Rome. He wishes that the people should think of the heir, as in the days of the kings. The prestige which his Austrian Empress has in his own eyes, he is determined that the people, the army, and all the public functionaries shall recognize. He seems to imagine that he can impose on the entire nation the ideas of perpetuity, and of confidence in his dynasty.

Up to this time, the Empress Marie-Louise had had no more part in the government than the Empress Joséphine. One of his favorite sayings was: "A minister of State should never permit a woman to approach his cabinet." Now he decides to bring the Empress out of the seclusion in which he has kept her, and invest her with a title which would make an impression on the masses. During the three months that he passed at Paris, his mind was more occupied with this idea than with subjects of much greater importance, and a brief review of his activities is necessary in order to understand some moves which have appeared casual or accidental.[1]

Three days after his return, he ordered Regnault to make a thorough research of all the records, from the reign of Charlemagne, for the forms observed in the coronation of a presumptive heir to the throne. He also directed that a similar investigation should be undertaken with regard to the regencies in French history. Within a week he received from the Imperial Printing Office a little brochure of fourteen pages on the Coronations, and ten days later another, on the Regencies. Of these pamphlets only a few copies were struck off, for the information of the principal dignitaries of the Empire. During the first ten days of January, the matter was discussed at two

[1] See Masson, *Marie-Louise*, 416–461.

separate meetings of the Council, and the second brochure, of forty-one pages, was then published simultaneously in the *Moniteur* and the *Journal de l'Empire*. Beginning with the year 578, all the regencies, thirteen in number, were covered, down to the last one of Anne of Austria, during the minority of Louis the Fourteenth. Then, a few days later, the text of the first brochure, on the Coronations, was also printed in the same journals.

On the 19 January, the Emperor visited Grosbois, the country estate of Marshal Berthier, for a hunting party. There, he suddenly decided to go to Fontainebleau for dinner, instead of returning to Paris. This move seems to have been made on the spur of the moment, for no relays had been ordered, most of the rooms in the château were closed for the winter, and the stoves were not lighted.

When Napoleon took possession of the Papal States, the Pope had gone to Savona to live; but before leaving for the Russian campaign the Emperor had removed him to Fontainebleau, under the pretext that he was in danger of falling into the hands of the English, whose ships were cruising off Genoa.[1] The sole object of Napoleon's present visit was to see the Holy Father, with whom he had had no correspondence for over three years, or since the bulletin of excommunication had been issued.

Three weeks earlier, on the 29 December, Napoleon had taken the first step toward a reconciliation by writing Pius: "Perhaps we may be able to attain the object so much to be desired of putting an end to the differences which divide the Church and the State; for my part, I am very favorably disposed, and it will all depend on Your Holiness." To this overture the Pope had responded by charging Cardinal Joseph Doria with complimentary words. Napoleon had followed the matter up by sending to Fontainebleau the Bishop of Nantes, Mgr. Duvoisin, in whom he placed much confidence. Duvoisin found the three cardinals who were at Fontainebleau

[1] See 2 Artaud, 293.

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with the Pope very favorably disposed, and he was reënforced by three French bishops who strongly supported him. But the Pope still held out: "He persists in saying that he has the greatest desire to satisfy the Emperor, but that his conscience does not permit him to announce his decision while alone, a prisoner without counsel."

It was true that the consent of the Pope had not been asked when he was "invited" to take up his residence at Fontainebleau, but in every other respect he had been treated as a sovereign and not as a captive. Besides his personal suite, consisting of an almoner, a physician, a cook, and five other attendants, the Emperor had furnished him with a complete service. He had been received on his arrival by the Duc de Cadore, and installed in the apartment of the King of Rome. A detachment of the cavalry and infantry of the Guard had been provided as an escort and a service of honor. Napoleon thought that his visit as a guest under the roof of the Pope's residence ought to convince the Holy Father that he was not a prisoner, and should remove this final obstacle to a complete reconciliation.

Napoleon reached Fontainebleau after dark, at six-thirty in the evening, and without waiting for dinner sent an usher to demand an audience with the Pope. He was received very cordially, and the two sovereigns "embraced each other with as much affection as two friends who had not met in a long time."

No one had any idea of the plans of Napoleon, not even Marie-Louise whom he had brought with him. But she was rejoiced at the apparent change in the policy of the Emperor, and felt that peace with the Church would make peace easier with Europe.

During this short sojourn of a week, so different from the former visits to Fontainebleau, every one suffered intensely from the cold. Even Napoleon felt the temperature of six or seven degrees, and was obliged to exchange his small apartment on the *rez-de-chaussée* for one on the first floor.

On the 25 January Napoleon signed a new Concordat with

the Pope. The same day, after a visit to Pius the Seventh, Marie-Louise wrote her father: "We have been for six days at Fontainebleau where to-day the Emperor has arranged the affairs of Christianity with the Pope. The Pope seemed well satisfied. He is very gay, and busy since an early hour this morning: he signed the treaty a quarter of an hour ago. I have just come from his apartment: I found him very well. He has a very handsome and very interesting face. I am sure that you will learn with as much interest as myself the news of this reconciliation."

The great desire of Napoleon for this reconciliation is shown by the extreme concessions which he made, amounting to a complete reversal of his former policy, and the restoration to the Pope of all his former rights and privileges as the Supreme Pontiff.[1] The sole object which Napoleon had in view was to assure the consecration of his dynasty by Pius the Seventh, as he himself had been invested by him. In issuing from his captivity to crown the Empress and the King of Rome, the Pope would put his seal upon the Empire in the eyes of all Europe, and assure tranquillity at home as well as peace abroad. Well satisfied with the success of his mission, on the 27 January, after a final visit to the Pope, Napoleon returned with the Empress to Paris.

On the first of February, still under the conviction that the entente was definite and permanent, the Emperor called a meeting of the Council, and submitted the decree relative to the coronation of the Empress and the Prince Imperial, the King of Rome. With their usual subserviency to his wishes not one of the members seems to have pointed out to the Emperor that the new decree was in violation of the fundamental law of the Empire, which, in express terms, declared: "Women are excluded from the Regency."

Four days later the decree was adopted, and the Coronation was unofficially announced for the 7 March. All of the vassals and allies of the Emperor were invited to be present on

[1] The text of the Second Concordat (the first was in 1801), known as the Treaty of Fontainebleau, is given in 2 DeClercq, 377. See also Mowat, 263.

that date, but the notice was not made official, as Napoleon had already received warnings which made him hesitate. Rumors had reached him that the Italian cardinals, included in the amnesty, had regained their influence over the Pope, and that he was wavering. It was therefore necessary to act prudently.

However, the matter could not remain indefinitely in a state of indecision, so the Emperor had the text of the Concordat published in the *Moniteur* on the day that he opened the session of the Legislative Body, the 14 February, but he did not venture in his address to make any allusion to the Coronation.

On the 23 March, Napoleon was finally forced to declare publicly that the ceremony was postponed for the present on account of the preparations for the war. The following day, in a letter to the Emperor, the Pope withdrew his approval of the Concordat.[1]

But the matter had gone too far for the Emperor to abandon entirely the project, so on the 30 March the Regency was announced at a kind of fête of the Court given at the Élysée. With considerable ceremony, Marie-Louise was formally invested with the title of Regent, in the presence only of the grand dignitaries, the ministers, the two Imperial princesses who were in Paris at the time, and a few ladies of the Court. In place of the long constitutional oath, which the Empress was to have pronounced at Notre-Dame, Marie-Louise simply swore to be faithful to the Emperor, and to carry out the orders which he might give her during his absence. Such was the feeble *dénouement* of this grandiose scheme which had so largely occupied the thoughts of the Emperor since his return: "in place of an altar, there was a green carpet; in place of a nation, a Court; in place of the army, half a score of women in evening gowns!"

It would give a very false impression of Napoleon, however, to represent that during this winter of 1813 he was exclusively preoccupied with one idea. He held two or three meetings of

[1] See 2 Artaud, 323–325.

the Council nearly every day, and never worked harder in his life. It required an immense effort to set in motion again the governmental machine which he had abandoned for seven months, and had neglected for three years. To govern France during his absence in Russia he had left Cambacérès, who was a *pleutre*, and ministers who were only head-clerks. In place of Talleyrand he had as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Maret, Duc de Bassano, of whom Talleyrand viciously said: "I know of but one person more stupid than M. Maret: it is the Duc de Bassano." Savary, Duc de Rovigo, who was only a "gendarme," had succeeded Fouché as Minister of Police — Fouché, "the humble unfrocked priest, more powerful through his craftiness than the general at the head of a million men, the universal spider spreading his net throughout the vast Empire until the Master himself was helpless in its invisible web." [1]

In leaving Paris, the Emperor had not only retained all his authority, he had disorganized his administration, for even Maret followed the army. He alone continued to govern that vast Empire, extending from the shores of the Baltic to the Pillars of Hercules, by couriers who took from three to five weeks to come and go between Paris and his headquarters.

The correspondence which Napoleon carried on during the winter months of 1813 had never been more voluminous, nor more vigorous and diversified. But his greatest achievement was the immense army which he caused to spring from the earth, which he not only raised, but armed, equipped, clothed, and provisioned.

In the midst of all these occupations, he found much time to give to the Empress, and hunted very frequently, in order to keep himself in training, as well as to give the lie to the reports in the English papers, which from day to day announced his declining health and approaching death. The receptions, the entertainments, the mode of life of the sovereigns and of the Court were precisely the same as in preceding winters. Etiquette had resumed its full sway: every

[1] Guérard, *The Napoleonic Legend*, 217

Sunday there was the usual diplomatic audience before the Mass, and the grand reception afterwards; the reviews of the Guard and of the Paris garrison were held as formerly. To read the reports in the Paris journals, no one would imagine that there were no longer any French troops beyond the Rhine, or that the Allies were preparing to invade the Empire.

Marie-Louise appeared to be full of confidence. "I am sure," she wrote her father, "that you share the happiness I have felt in seeing my husband again after an absence of nearly seven months. The new year could not begin under more favorable auspices." In all her letters she speaks of her pleasure in "seeing the Emperor in such fine health — not fatigued, and even stouter."

All the efforts of the Emperor had failed to make Marie-Louise popular with the Parisians. In vain he showed her in public: when he passed in a carriage with her and the King of Rome, or appeared with her in the State box at the theatres, the public applauded, but the cheers were all for him. When she visited alone the salons of sculpture or painting in the Louvre she was always coldly received. She could never overcome her unfortunate manner, and alienated all hearts. In his tours of inspection, to visit the public works going on in Paris, Napoleon made it a point of always taking the Empress with him, but she played only a passive rôle: "She never utters a pleasant word, does not even find a graceful gesture, a complaisant smile, or a flash of admiration." In fact she was the exact opposite of Joséphine, "who won all hearts."

Even the entertainments of the Court no longer amused her, and she wrote that she did not care to dance. The only things that she really liked were the morning rides with the Emperor, and the luncheons with him tête-à-tête, in the new kiosque on the bank of the river, or the pavillon of Bagatelle in the Bois. She felt instinctively the antipathy which she aroused on every side, and clung all the closer to the tenderness and affection of her husband. She even regretted that there was no prospect of her having another child, and in a

letter of congratulations to a friend said: "I am almost tempted to envy you, and to wish that it were not so, because I have not the same good fortune."

At the end of the first week in March, Marie-Louise persuaded the Emperor to move to the Trianon. The party was a small one, comprising among others Duroc, Caulaincourt, Hortense, and Catherine, the wife of Jérôme, who had been chased from Westphalia. There were no entertainments of any kind, and the palace had never been so sad and quiet. The Emperor dined when he had time, often not before eight o'clock, and then, overcome with fatigue, "dragged his wife off to bed at nine."

On the 23 March they returned to the Tuileries for the closing of the session of the Corps Législatif, but went a few days later to the Élysée, where the Emperor could work better, and also enjoy the promenades in the gardens.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

### 1813

### THE LEIPZIG CAMPAIGN

Napoleon Disregards His Maxims — His Failure to Withdraw from Spain — Last Review at the Tuileries — A Brilliant Scene — Picture of the Emperor — Napoleon Leaves for Mayence — The Empress as Regent — Victories of Lutzen and Bautzen — The Armistice — A Fatal Error — Interview with Metternich — Marie-Louise Supports the Emperor — Their Meeting at Mayence — The Empress Returns to Paris — Her Visit to Cherbourg — Her Correspondence with Her Father — Opening of the Senate — Austria Joins the Allies — Napoleon's Dangerous Position — Victory of Dresden — The Marshals Defeated — The Grand Army Destroyed at Leipzig — Napoleon Returns to Paris

IN THE *Maxims* of Napoleon we read: "To extraordinary circumstances we must apply extraordinary remedies . . . Things which are only half done are badly done. Either we must be blind, or if we see, we must act accordingly . . . Half measures are always dangerous." If Napoleon had adopted these wise principles as the basis of his politics in 1812 and 1813, he might have died upon the throne of France, and have been succeeded by the King of Rome as peacefully as any King of England was ever succeeded by any Prince of Wales. But his glory would never have had the same human appeal. To make the drama of his career complete, it required the Return from Elba, "the eagle flying from steeple to steeple until it reached the towers of Notre-Dame," the final disaster of Waterloo, and the supreme tragedy of Saint Helena. It is the contrast of light and shadow that makes the life of Napoleon the most fascinating romance in history.

Early in 1812, before the Russian campaign, Napoleon decided to abandon all of Spain south of the Ebro, and withdraw a large part of his forces from the Peninsula. This plan was so violently opposed by King Joseph, and the marshals in Spain, that he gave it up. After the disaster in Russia, his

only wise course was to send Ferdinand back to his throne, and retire, not behind the Ebro, but within his own frontiers. The Pyrenees, for their entire length of 250 miles, were crossed only by mule tracks, and were impassable for an army except at the ends of the range upon the Bay of Biscay and the Mediterranean, which could easily have been held by two army corps of fifty thousand men each. This would have released 150,000 veteran troops for service in Germany, and he had about the same number of men holding the fortresses between the Rhine and the Vistula. He would thus have had a veteran army of 300,000 men, besides a reserve of 250,000 new recruits in training in the dépôts of France. With such an army, larger than the one he led into Russia, he could easily have defended the line of the Elbe against the Russians and Prussians, and Austria would never have joined the coalition against him.

But this discussion is purely academic, for Napoleon failed to take this course, which ordinary prudence dictated. At this time he seems to have lost his mental balance: "the passion for the grandiose had overmastered the calculating faculties which in early life generally held ambition in leash." [1] He was no longer disposed "to draw back in order to leap further," as he had done at Essling, and in seeking to hold everything he was to end by losing everything. Like a desperate gambler, he played *le tout sur le tout*, and hazarded to lose all in order to gain all.

On Friday the 5 March 1813, Napoleon held a review of the Old Guard in the court of the Tuileries. This was destined to be the last of those magnificent parades which for so many years had aroused the enthusiasm of the Parisians. The Guard was to execute once more those manœuvres of which the precision often excited the admiration even of the Emperor himself.

A feeling of curiosity had brought to the Tuileries a large but sober gathering of the people. The Russian disaster had

[1] Rose, *Personality of Napoleon*, 365.

dimmed the once glorious prestige of the Emperor: every one doubted the future, and dreaded the outcome of the campaign. The crowd was assembled in the Carrousel, and in the restricted space between the walls of the château and the chains which cut off the large sanded squares of the court. The sentinels, posted so as to preserve a passage free for the Emperor and his staff, had difficulty in keeping back the eager throng. The glorious tricolor was floating from the summit of the Pavillon de l'Horloge, in the centre of the long gray façade of the palace. In front of the vestibule, a Mameluke held by the bridle a small white Arabian, with a saddle upon a housing of green and gold.

The regiments of the Old Guard, drawn up in lines ten ranks deep, facing the palace, filled one side of the immense court, the centre of which was kept free for the evolutions of the troops. Outside the enclosure, in the Carrousel, drawn up in parallel lines, several regiments were waiting, ready to file under the triumphal arch, which was then crowned by the magnificent Venetian horses. In the background, under the walls of the Louvre, the regimental bands were stationed. The rays of light reflected from ten thousand bayonets, the vivid contrasts of colors in the many different uniforms, the plumes floating in the air, presented a scene brilliant beyond description.

The waiting throng was filled with a repressed enthusiasm. France was gathered here to bid adieu to her Emperor on the eve of a campaign of which even the humblest citizen appreciated the danger. Every one realized that the fate of the Empire was at stake. Many of these soldiers were relatives or friends of the spectators, who had gathered to see them perhaps for the last time. But in all hearts, even those the most hostile to the Emperor, there was the same ardent wish for success and glory for their native land. At this hour of supreme danger, Napoleon *was* France, with all her hopes and all her fears.

The clock in the central pavilion struck the half-hour. Instantly the murmur of the crowd ceased, and in the silence

one could almost have heard a pin drop. At the entrance of the palace, there suddenly appeared a short, stout man, dressed in a green uniform, with white breeches and black riding-boots. Upon his head was the legendary three-cornered hat with its little tricolored cockade; the broad red ribbon of the Légion was across his breast, and a small sword at his side. The drums beat the charge; the martial music of the regimental bands filled the air; the flags saluted, and the soldiers presented arms. The expectant crowd, as one man, loudly cried: "Vive l'Empereur!"

Napoleon mounted his horse, and at the word of command the regiments were all in movement: the review had begun. Motionless upon his horse, three paces in front of his staff, with the grand marshal, Duroc, at his left, and the marshal of the day at his right, Napoleon watched the troops defile before him. In his plain uniform and modest cocked hat with its penny cockade, he presented a marked contrast to the officers of his staff, with their plumed hats and brilliant uniforms. In response to the enthusiastic cheers of his soldiers, no sign of emotion appeared upon his calm, grave face. The morning of Austerlitz, the evening of Eylau; under the fire of Ratisbon, and amidst the dead and dying of Borodino, he was always tranquil.

On the 15 April, at four o'clock in the morning, Napoleon left Saint-Cloud to join the Grand Army. He had Caulaincourt, the grand écuyer, in the berline with him; in two other carriages he was followed by the grand marshal, Duroc, an aide de camp, a secretary, and his surgeon. His entire military household was awaiting him at Mayence, where he arrived at one o'clock on the morning of the seventeenth.

He had left Marie-Louise behind him to act as Regent — an office which was purely nominal. The government was really carried on by a Council of the ministers, presided over by the arch-chancellor, Cambacérès. The Empress had as advisers, besides Cambacérès, the Secretary of State to the Regency, Champagny, and Napoleon's private secretary, Méneval,

named to the new office of Secretary of Commands. The functions of the Regent were limited to signing commissions in the army below the rank of captain, and to presiding at those meetings of the Council where only current matters of no importance were discussed. Napoleon at this time abandoned the former popular *Bulletins of the Grand Army*, and substituted for them the *News of the Army*, published in the *Moniteur* in the name of the Empress.

Even at a distance, Napoleon followed closely all of her acts. One morning Cambacérès called at the Tuileries at an early hour, before Marie-Louise was up, and she received the aged chancellor in her bed. This called forth an immediate reproof from Napoleon. "It is my intention," he wrote, "that while you are abed you shall receive no one, no matter who he is, under any circumstances or upon any pretext: that is not permissible under the age of thirty years."

Napoleon's formal letters to the Empress were always addressed: "Madame et chère Amie," while his daily familiar letters began: "Ma chère Louise." None of this intimate correspondence has been preserved.

By almost super-human efforts Napoleon had succeeded during the winter of 1813 in raising a new army of 360,000 men, made up of 30,000 veteran troops withdrawn from Spain, 80,000 men enlisted as a Home Guard in 1812, and 250,000 conscripts. With this motley force, on the second of May he defeated the Allies at Lutzen. Six days later he entered Dresden, and Saxony returned to her alliance with him. On the 20–21 May he gained another victory at Bautzen; but neither of these battles was decisive, principally owing to the fact that he had not sufficient cavalry to follow them up.

On the 4 June, the Emperor signed an armistice, which with its extensions lasted until the 10 August. This was the first great error which he made in this unfortunate campaign. After his two victories, the coalition was on the point of dissolving: if he intended to continue the war, he should not

have agreed to the armistice; if he sincerely desired peace, he should have been prepared to make some concessions. The terms proposed were: (1) That the Grand Duchy of Warsaw should be abolished; (2) That Prussia should regain her former boundaries; (3) That the Confederation of the Rhine should be dissolved; and (4) That Trieste and Dalmatia should be restored to Austria.[1] Under these conditions Napoleon could have had "peace with honor." France would have retained all of Italy, and her "natural boundaries," the Pyrenees and the frontier of the Rhine, including Belgium and Holland.

His action is all the more difficult to understand, because, since his interview of the 16 May with Bubna at Dresden, he was warned that he could not count on the support, or even on the neutrality, of Austria. In the days of his greatest power, he had never had to face a coalition of Russia, Prussia, and Austria, united at the same time; how could he hope to succeed now?

After the eight-hour audience which he gave to Metternich on the 26 June, he could no longer have any doubts regarding the attitude of his father-in-law. In addition to the previous terms, Francis demanded that he should give up half of Italy, and withdraw from Holland and Spain.[2]

"I made a stupid blunder when I married an Austrian Archduchess!" cried the Emperor.

"Since Your Majesty wishes to know my opinion," replied Metternich, "I will say very frankly that Napoleon *the Conqueror* made a mistake."

"So the Emperor Francis desires to dethrone his daughter?"

"The Emperor knows only his duty, and he will fulfill it. Whatever the fortune in store for his daughter, the Emperor Francis is first of all a sovereign, and the interests of his peoples will always hold the first place in his calculations." . . .

"Yes," said Napoleon in conclusion, "what you tell me does not surprise me. . . . I understand to-day the full ex-

[1] See Mowat, 278–280.
[2] See 2 Metternich, 461.

tent of my error. It will perhaps cost me my throne, but I will bury the world under its ruins!"

Napoleon's dream was ended, and he saw the abyss yawning before him. In his dilemma he thought of his wife, and decided to send for her to meet him at Mayence. In a letter to Cambacérès from Dresden under date of the 16 July, he regulated the details of her journey with the most minute care. She was to leave Paris on the 22 July, spend one night at Châlons, another at Metz, and arrive on the third day.

Before leaving Saint-Cloud, Marie-Louise answered a letter from her father, in which he announced the intention of Austria to join the coalition. After expressing her regret, she concludes with the words: "The Emperor would not love me if he were not assured of my sentiments for you, and you would not love me if my first wishes were not for the happiness of the Emperor and of my son." With these words she definitely took her stand beside her husband, without any pressure from him, and in terms which could not be more appropriate.

Under later orders from the Emperor, the departure was postponed for twenty-four hours, and she reached Mayence at an early hour on the 26 July, in a tropical rain-storm. Napoleon was not yet there, but he arrived late that night, having made the journey from Dresden in forty-four hours, travelling day and night. He was accompanied only by Berthier, Caulaincourt, and two aides de camp.

We have no particulars of his conversations with the Empress during this short visit of six days. He was continually at work, reviewing the troops on their way to join the Grand Army, receiving the authorities, and making long promenades with Marie-Louise on both banks of the Rhine. In public he was very silent and thoughtful. He told the Empress that he felt no uneasiness, and was sure that everything would turn out all right. Whether he really felt confident or not, he at least pretended that he was sure of the success of his arms, and made many plans for the future, ordering work on the palace which would take several years to complete.

On the first of August, Napoleon left for Dresden, and the following morning Marie-Louise began her return trip to Paris. She spent three days in going down the Rhine to Cologne, on the yacht of the Prince of Nassau. From Cologne she proceeded slowly to Paris, stopping at Aix-la-Chapelle, Namur, Rethel, and Compiègne, arriving at Saint-Cloud on the 9 August.

Two weeks later, by orders of the Emperor, she went to Cherbourg to be present at the opening of the new basin in the port. While there she received news from Napoleon of the great victory on the 26 August over the allied armies, commanded in person by the Emperors of Austria and Russia, and the King of Prussia. Although her father was one of the vanquished sovereigns, she seemed much pleased. On the 5 September, she was back again at Saint-Cloud, where she resumed the quiet and monotonous life she had led the previous year.

During the autumn, by the express wish of Napoleon, she continued her correspondence with her father, but this fact was carefully concealed from the public, in order not to awaken the old animosity against the *Autrichienne*. On the 7 October she appeared in great state at the opening of the Senate. She read the address prepared for her so well as to gain general approbation. "She was neither bold nor timid," remarked Talleyrand, "and she displayed dignity, joined to much tact and propriety." It was a success for the Empress, but *un succès de salon*, which meant nothing.

Before the armistice ended, on the 10 August, Napoleon should have withdrawn his army behind the Rhine, where his position would have been absolutely impregnable. "As long as we hold the Rhine," said Marshal Foch recently, "we have nothing to fear from Germany." This barrier was even stronger in 1813 than it is to-day. Napoleon's line of communications ran from Mayence through Erfurt and Weimar to Leipzig, and this was also his best line of retreat. As soon as Austria joined the coalition, his flank and rear were exposed to attack from the forces massed behind the

Bohemian mountains, and his position at Dresden was very dangerous. It is true, as he claimed, that the Allies were stretched out on an arc extending from Berlin to Prague, and that he had the advantage of operating from the centre on interior lines. Moreover, judging from the past, he thought that the Allies would fail to concentrate their forces, and that he could meet and defeat them in detail; but they had learned wisdom from experience.

Continuous reënforcements had brought the French army up to 500,000 men, and the Emperor expected to outnumber the Allies, even when they were joined by Austria, but they put in line 570,000 men, and later were reënforced by 300,000 more troops.

On the 26–27 August, at Dresden, Napoleon won his last great victory, but like the others in this campaign it was not decisive. The battle was fought in a pouring rain, and the Emperor, who had exposed himself freely, was confined to his room for three days afterward by an attack of chills and fever.[1] He was forced to turn the pursuit over to his marshals, who failed to push it.

Within the next few days, bad news was received from every quarter: Macdonald was defeated upon the Katzbach, Vandamme at Kulm, Ney at Dennewitz; and the South German contingents began to go over to the Allies. At the same time, the coalition was drawn closer by the treaty of Töplitz, signed the 9 September 1813.

In this desperate situation, instead of acting with his old vigor, Napoleon wasted a whole month at Dresden without doing anything. Having undertaken a defensive campaign, for the first time in his career, he seems to have lost all initiative. In the meantime, the Allies had outmanœuvred him, and stood in full force upon his line of retreat. In this predicament, when he should have tried to turn their flank and reach the Rhine, he "deliberately committed strategic suicide"

[1] This was the "mysterious malady" spoken of by Lord Wolseley. See his *Decline and Fall of Napoleon*, 28 and 64. Also Dr Cabanès, *Au chevet de l' Empereur*, 184–205.

by marching his army to Leipzig. Here, on the 16–19 October, he was overwhelmed by superior numbers, and his army nearly destroyed. He retreated to the Rhine, and from Mayence returned directly to Paris.

Thus ended the Campaign of Leipzig, the most unsound that Napoleon ever conducted, and the most disastrous in its results.

# CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

## 1814

## FALL OF THE EMPIRE

Napoleon's Futile Efforts to Raise a New Army — The Frontiers Defenceless — Objections to a *Levée en Masse* — No Change in the Court Life — Return to the Tuileries — The Legislative Body Convoked and Dismissed — The Allies Cross the Rhine — Treason in Paris — Deputies Sent *en Mission* — The Empress and Her Son Entrusted to the National Guard — The Campaign of France — Fatal Manœuvre of Napoleon — He Starts for Paris — His Abdication — The Regency — Correspondence of Marie-Louise with Her Father — Her Letter to Napoleon — Meeting of the Council — Napoleon's Orders — The Government Leaves Paris — Protests of the King of Rome — Proclamation and Flight of Joseph — Capitulation of Paris — The Court at Blois — Francis Reaches Paris Too Late — Louise Wishes to Rejoin the Emperor

DURING the eleven short weeks that he passed at Paris, between his return from Germany in November and his departure to head the army the last week in January, Napoleon worked night and day to raise and equip a new army. For this purpose he used without stint the hundred million francs in the vaults of the Tuileries, the savings of ten years from the funds of his Civil list. But his efforts were almost fruitless. France, bled white by twenty years of war, could no longer furnish him the men he needed. On paper he succeeded in raising a levy of nearly a million men, but not more than a third could be armed and equipped, and not over one-eighth ever fought.[1] His total available forces did not exceed one hundred thousand men, and they were scattered at a dozen different points from Brussels to Bâle. The nation which for twenty years had not seen an invader on its soil was not prepared for defence. The fortresses of the Vistula and the Elbe were strongly garrisoned and well supplied, but little thought had been given to the strong-places of France. Over one hundred thousand troops were cut off and unavailable

[1] See Houssaye, *1814*, 8–14.

in Germany, and as many more were still holding the North of Spain, but in France there were not enough soldiers to guard the Rhine.

The only measure which might have been effective was an appeal to the Revolutionary fervor, the *levée en masse*, which in 1793 had driven the invaders from the soil of France. But the marshals opposed this idea; the ministers feared it; and the Emperor was reluctant to adopt it, both for personal and dynastic reasons. He therefore did nothing beyond mobilizing the National Guard of Paris. He seemed to be afraid or ashamed of calling the Revolution to the succor of the Fatherland: afraid to become again, in the eyes of the allied kings, what he had never ceased to be, a Jacobin *parvenu;* ashamed to degrade himself in the estimation of his Austrian Archduchess by ceasing to be a prince like the other princes. In releasing against the invading sovereigns the tempest of the popular fury, he feared also that, once aroused, it might get beyond his control, and sweep away himself, his dynasty, the nobility he had created, and the society he had reëstablished. Once more, he resorted to half-measures, when only "extraordinary remedies" would have sufficed.

In the meantime, as calm as under fire on the field of battle, the Emperor ordered that the life of the Court should go on as usual. There were the usual audiences and receptions, spectacles and concerts, excursions to Trianon, and long hunts in the vicinity of Paris.

On the 20 November, they returned to the Tuileries, much against the wishes of Marie-Louise, because she preferred the air of Saint-Cloud. At the Opéra, the appearance of the Emperor was greeted with frantic cheers; when he promenaded the streets of Paris, to inspect the public works, he was followed by a crowd, who acclaimed him, and covered him with benedictions.

At this moment, when the situation demanded a dictatorship, as if unwilling to bear alone the responsibility, Napoleon convoked the Corps Législatif, to assemble on the 19 December. His opening address was marked by a proud dignity, as

he frankly admitted his errors. But the committee appointed to draft a reply to the address, seized the opportunity to set up the Legislative Body as the real national power, and refused the necessary appropriations. Finding only opposition, where he sought for support, on the 31 December the Emperor had the session adjourned.

On the last day of the year the Allies crossed the Rhine, and the invasion of France began. But at the Tuileries everything went on the same as in the happy days of the past. The Empress as usual made her gifts of Sèvres to the princesses of the family and the ladies of her Court, while the Emperor presented tapestries from the Gobelins. At the New Year's reception the following day, Napoleon spoke very severely to the Duchesse Dalberg regarding the bad faith of her husband, and threatened to expel her from France. At this time only rumors had reached the ears of the Emperor, and he little realized the extent of the treason which was being plotted against him on all sides. Dalberg, who was closely leagued with Talleyrand, had sent his secretary to Frankfort to expose the weakness of Napoleon, and to tell the allied sovereigns that they would be received at Paris with open arms. On the strength of this information, the Allies withdrew the offer made through Saint-Aignan in November to treat for peace on the basis of the "natural frontiers," and decided to march on Paris.

To the deputies who came to present their homages on the first day of the year, in place of the mandate of arrest which they looked for, he said: "Return to your departments: go and tell France that, no matter what they say, it is upon her that they make war as much as against me, and that she must defend, not only my person, but her national existence."

Having sent these deputies home, to spread treason through every city and town in France, the Emperor recalled to mind the *Conventionnels en mission* whose work he had seen as Captain Bonaparte, and despatched members of the Senate to all the departments — those Senators, of whom Fontanes had recently said to Molé: "The great majority hate the Em-

peror; the old Senate, about eighteen, Sieyès and the Idéologues, desire a Directory; a large number, the party of Talleyrand, favor the King of Rome and the Regent; a very small number is devoted to the Emperor."

On the 14 January, Napoleon ordered his horses sent to Châlons, but he still delayed his departure from the capital. On Sunday, the 23 January, he ordered that the officers of the National Guard should be assembled after Mass in the Salle des Maréchaux. Here he met them with the Empress, with the little King of Rome between them. In a few brief words he announced his departure, and confided his wife and son to their devotion. He was answered by frenzied and prolonged cries of "Vive l'Empereur!"[1]

Monday evening Hortense alone came to dine with them, and after her departure he spent most of the night in burning his most secret papers. Tuesday morning at six o'clock he took his departure, after tenderly embracing his wife and child, whom he was never to see again.

It is not our purpose to relate again the story of this marvellous Campaign of France, the finest that Napoleon ever conducted. With a little army of fifty thousand men, he defeated and drove back in turn the three armies of the Allies, each of which far outnumbered his own. At the end of six weeks, the Allies were no nearer the capital than at the beginning of the campaign. Napoleon then decided to pass in the rear of the allied armies and cut their lines of communication in the expectation that they would follow him and be drawn away from Paris. Owing to an unfortunate combination of circumstances this manœuvre failed, and resulted in his fall within a few days. The Allies intercepted a letter from Savary to the Emperor, describing the exhaustion of the treasury, the arsenals and the magazines; also speaking of the grave discontent of the population. At the same time there also fell into their hands a letter from Napoleon to the Empress, telling her of his plans. Upon the strength of this

[1] Houssaye, 33.

information, the Allies suddenly decided to cut loose from their communications and march directly on Paris.

When Napoleon learned of this move, he started for Paris, ordering his army to follow him by forced marches. At eleven o'clock on the night of the 30 March, when about halfway between Fontainebleau and Paris, he heard of the capitulation of the city that morning. He slept that night in a chair at the post-house, the *Cour de France*, at Juvisy, and returned at daybreak to Fontainebleau. Here, on the 4 April, he signed his first, conditional, abdication in favor of his son. This might have been accepted by the sovereigns except for the treason of Marmont, whose officers led his corps within the allied lines. This act destroyed the last hopes of Napoleon, and on the 6 April he signed his second and unconditional act of abdication. Two weeks later, after a touching farewell to his Old Guard, he started for Elba.

When he left Paris, the Emperor conferred the Regency upon Marie-Louise, but with even less powers than the year before. With some difficulty he had brought about a reconciliation with Joseph, who had finally agreed to renounce all his claims to Spain. The day before his departure Napoleon gave him verbally the title of his lieutenant-general, and the command of the National Guard of Paris. Cambacérès retained his former position, but his mind had become very feeble, and he was of little use. Of the other grand dignitaries of the Empire, Lebrun, recently returned from Holland, was ill; Talleyrand was in communication with the Allies; Berthier was with the army, and Eugène in Italy. Louis had returned to Paris the first of the year, but still refused to give up his pretensions to Holland; crippled from a terrible disease, he had retired to his estate near Paris. Lucien was still interned in England, and Jérôme was a nonentity; besides, neither of these brothers was a dignitary.

Thus, without a counselor upon whom she could rely, the Regent was reduced to a state of impotency. Under these conditions she simply carried out obediently the instructions

that she received from the Emperor. On two occasions only she attempted to take some initiative. When Caulaincourt was sent on the 4 February as special envoy to the sovereigns, to endeavor to negotiate peace, she gave him a letter and a verbal message to her father. The second time was when she wished to make a pilgrimage to Sainte-Geneviève, the patron saint of Paris, as she had rendered her vows years before at Vienna when the city was threatened by the French. This second undertaking was forbidden by the Emperor, as he would also have disapproved of the first if he had known of it in time.

The few letters that she received from Napoleon during the campaign spoke only of his health and of the weather. From time to time, she wrote Joseph to implore him to give her fuller news than the vague reports in the papers. In reply, Joseph told her not to worry, and to take a promenade in the Bois!

On the 22 February she wrote her father a letter, which, duly approved by Napoleon, was despatched a few days later. She begged him not to impose a dishonorable peace which could not be durable. She prayed him also to remember her and her son, and concluded with the words: "You know how much I love you, and also how much I am flattered to possess your paternal love."

From Plancy, on the 20 March, Napoleon urged Marie-Louise to write her father again. She complied at once, and her reply to the Emperor, which is the only letter we have of this almost daily correspondence, is worth quoting in full:

*To the Emperor*

PARIS, 21 March, 10 P.M.

Mon cher ami, I have received to-night your letter of the 20 March from Plancy. I see with much pleasure that you are content with the turn of your affairs. I hope that they will progress now entirely to your satisfaction. At least, that is my prayer. I wish, mon cher ami, that you may be as happy as you deserve to be. All Paris is full of good news. It seems that

[1] Masson, 543–544.

much has been added to the reports which the courier was able to give, so that they talk much of battles won, and above all of peace.

I have written my father as you desired, but as it is rather late to-day I am afraid that I cannot make a copy of the letter. You will have it to-morrow, for I shall send it by the eleven o'clock courier. I wish indeed that my letters might do some good, but I doubt it. When it comes to a matter of affairs, my father pays but little attention to me . . .

I have not seen the King [Joseph]. He rarely comes to see me in the morning. I am well satisfied, because I think that meets your wishes.

Your son embraces you: he is remarkably well. He has not slept well to-night: he has cried in his sleep and has been very restless. We have asked him what was the matter. He said that he had dreamed of his dear papa, but that he was not able to tell us what, and we have not succeeded in getting any explanation.

My health is very good. The spring-season agrees with me wonderfully . . . It has been so mild that I have been able to ride. That has done me much good, but what would do me the most good of all would be to see you again, and to be worried no longer.

I love you, and embrace you tenderly.

Ta fidèle amie

LOUISE

This letter was intercepted by the scouts of the Allies, but the letter to her father reached its destination. In it she prayed her father, by all that was most sacred, not to push matters to the bitter end. "In so doing," she said, "you will sacrifice the interests of your monarchy and the happiness of your life."

On the morning of the 28 March, the news spread through Paris, by word of mouth (for the journals were silent), that the enemy was only five leagues from the city. Hortense went to the Tuileries in search of information, but found that the Empress knew no more than herself. At four o'clock Marie-Louise gave orders to prepare everything for her departure the next day. At eight-thirty the Council assembled.

There were present, besides the Empress: Joseph, Talleyrand, Cambacérès, Lebrun, the president of the Senate, and all the ministers. There was really nothing to discuss, for the orders previously given by the Emperor were absolute: if the entire allied army menaced Paris, the Government must leave. Nevertheless, Joseph brought the question up for discussion: all except himself, and Clarke, the Minister of War, were of the opinion that the Empress should remain. Then Joseph produced the orders of the Emperor: "Never leave the Empress and the King of Rome in the hands of the enemy." These orders, under date of 8 February, were reiterated in a letter of 16 March, in which he said: "Do not leave my son, and remember that I would rather know that he was in the Seine than in the hands of the enemies of France."

The Council adjourned at one o'clock in the morning, and the Empress gave orders that every one should be ready to leave at six. Hortense, who was waiting at the Tuileries, said to her: "Sister, you know that in leaving Paris you neutralize the defence, and thus you will lose your crown; I see that you sacrifice it with much resignation." She replied: "You are right; it is not my fault; but the Council has so decided." Accustomed from childhood to a passive obedience, the thought of resisting an order of the Emperor never occurred to her.

During the night everything of value which could be carried away was packed up: the gold in the vaults, the Crown diamonds and the private jewels of the Empress; laces, and personal effects of every kind. The private papers, not destroyed or taken by the Emperor, were all burned by Méneval.

Nevertheless, Marie-Louise could not make up her mind to start. No letter came from the Emperor; so at nine o'clock she sent an officer to the Minister of War to demand the latest news. Jérôme rushed to the palace, and told his sister-in-law that she ought not to leave. She lost her head entirely, and did not know what to do. She sent again to Clarke, who said they must leave at once or the roads would not be open.

Orders therefore were given to enter the carriages, awaiting since eight o'clock. Then the little three-year-old King of Rome refused to go. He sobbed, he cried, and clung to the furniture, saying: "I do not wish to go. I do not want to leave my house; since Papa is not here, I am the master." It was necessary for his governess to carry him in her arms. "It seemed as though he were inspired," wrote Mme. de Luçay that same night.

The departure was viewed by a large and silent crowd: "There were tears in many eyes." The ten carriages were followed by the loaded *fourgons*, and the escort was composed of twelve hundred horsemen of different regiments of the Guard. The first night was passed at Rambouillet, where they arrived at five-thirty.

This same morning, Joseph had issued a proclamation: "Parisians, I remain with you. Let us take arms to defend this city, its monuments, its wealth, our wives, our children, everything which is dear to us." Then, at noon, he sent word to Mortier and Marmont, the two marshals in command, that they might enter into negotiations for the capitulation of the city, and retire upon the Loire. An hour later, without notifying any one, or delegating his authority, he fled from the city, and hastened to Rambouillet! At the same hour, Napoleon was galloping along the route to Troyes, making all possible speed to reach his capital, and defend it from the enemy.

The following morning, the 30 March, after waiting for news until eleven o'clock, the Empress left Rambouillet for Chartres, where she arrived at five-thirty, and lodged in the préfecture. During the night she received word that Joseph and Jérôme would join her the following morning at five, but that Hortense remained at Rambouillet. Louis prayed the Empress to write his wife to come to Chartres: Hortense received the order, and immediately set out for Navarre to join her mother.[1]

On the first of April, the Empress continued her journey

[1] See the author's *Napoleon and Josephine*, 365.

as far as Vendôme, and arrived the next night at Blois. Here she began a very active correspondence with the Emperor, at Fontainebleau. Napoleon gave orders for the members of the Court to depart from Blois at once: Madame to Nice, Julie to Marseille, and Louis to Montpellier.

Napoleon had decided to abdicate in favor of his son, and he requested Marie-Louise to write her father to support this plan. She obeyed at once, and sent the Emperor Francis a very touching letter. Unfortunately, Francis had been left behind at Dijon in the final rapid march of the Allies on Paris, and did not reach the capital until too late to make any effort to save the throne for his grandson.

After his final abdication, on the 6 April, Napoleon sent Colonel Galbois to Blois with a letter and some verbal instructions for the Empress. After reading this letter she announced her intention of rejoining the Emperor at Fontainebleau. "My duty," she said, "is to be beside the Emperor in a moment when he must be so unhappy." We know neither the contents of this letter, nor the verbal instructions given Galbois, but the colonel objected to her departure. She therefore abandoned the idea, and wrote another long letter to her father, which she sent to Paris by Comte Regnault.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

### 1814–1815

### THE SEPARATION

Reasons for Napoleon's Objection to the Visit of the Empress — She Appeals to Her Father for Refuge — She is Ordered to Go to Orléans — Her Carriages Pillaged en Route — Letter from Her Father — Metternich Advises Her to Go to Austria — She Departs for Rambouillet — Napoleon Attempts Suicide — The Empress Appropriates His Money — Francis Writes Napoleon — His Hypocrisy — Napoleon Acquiesces in the Plans — Marie-Louise Arrives in Vienna — She Goes to Aix — Comte de Neipperg — His Career — Scandalous Life of Marie-Louise at Aix — She Is Recalled to Vienna — Agrees Not to Write Napoleon — Napoleon's Letters During the Hundred Days — Her Attitude — Napoleon's Sentiments at Saint Helena — Last Years of Marie-Louise

UNTIL his final abdication on the 6 April, Napoleon did not wish to have Marie-Louise come to Fontainebleau. It was the headquarters of his army, and, before the treason of Marmont, he had not given up the hope of recapturing Paris by a *coup de main*. If, on the other hand, the allied sovereigns accepted his abdication in favor of the King of Rome, what value would they attach to the act if they saw the Empress reunited to him? Again, in case he assured the throne to his son by his death by his own hand, how would he have the courage to carry out this project if his wife were there?

The day of the 7 April, which was finally to decide the fate of Marie-Louise, found her in a state of the most painful uncertainty, and almost at the point of nervous prostration. Torn by so many conflicting emotions, she could not make up her mind what course to pursue. Notwithstanding the opposition of Galbois and her *entourage*, she still desired to rejoin the Emperor, but she was too much habituated to leaning upon others for advice, to take any independent action.

Finally, she decided to send another letter[1] to her father, praying him "to give her a place of refuge in his States." "For myself and my son, especially the latter," she wrote, "I am convinced that you do not wish to give him the island of Elba as his only heritage: . . . this unfortunate child, *who is innocent of all his father's faults*, does not deserve to share with him so sad a position." At the same moment that she thus separates her lot from that of Napoleon, and reproaches him with his errors, she also announces her intention of rejoining him. In conclusion, she says: "I am going to Fontainebleau to-morrow morning."

But her intention, which was apparently sincere, was frustrated by the arrival of Schouwalof, an aide de camp of the Czar, accompanied by Saint-Aignan, écuyer of the Emperor, brother-in-law of Caulaincourt, and an intimate friend of Mme. de Montebello. Schouwalof announced that he had been appointed Commissioner of the Allied Powers, and that he had orders to conduct the Empress and her son to Orléans. This was a signal for the dispersal of the remaining members of the Court. Every one made haste to procure a passport, and set out for Paris.

After distributing five hundred thousand francs among her household and the officers and soldiers of her escort, on the morning of the 9 April, Marie-Louise left Blois for Orléans. She carried with her the Crown diamonds and her own private jewels, while Méneval had charge of the Emperor's sword, in which was set the Regent diamond, now in the Louvre.

The princes and princesses of the family, not knowing what else to do, followed, as also a few members of the suite. En route, some of the carriages were pillaged by the Cossacks, but the party arrived safely at six o'clock.

The following morning, which was Easter Sunday, after Mass, she received Champagny, who had returned from Chanceaux with a letter from her father. He wrote:

"I have no fault to find with my son-in-law. On the con-

[1] The letters quoted in this chapter are nearly all cited in Masson, *Marie-Louise*, 567-622.

trary, I am very grateful to him for the happiness he has given my daughter. I would like, at the price of all my blood, to make you all happy. Such are my paternal feelings toward you. As emperor, I have other duties; I have contracted an alliance with the other sovereigns, and this alliance imposes on me the obligation to accede to their decisions. I do not know what these will be. I have sent Metternich ahead to find out. Whatever they may be, I must adopt them, and assist in their execution, but I shall be in despair at all the misfortune that my son-in-law may experience."

On Monday, the 11 April, Metternich arrived in Paris, and that day the treaty was concluded which assigned to Marie-Louise the duchies of Parma, Piacenza, and Guastalla. He wrote the Empress that this would give her "an independent existence which would pass to her august son"; that the best arrangement for the moment would be for her to go to Austria with her son, to await the time when she could choose between the places occupied by the Emperor Napoleon and her own establishment; that she would be tranquil for the moment, and free for the future; finally: that everything said to her on the subject of her journey to Austria was in accordance with the paternal intentions of her august father.

Bausset, who carried this letter, returned to Orléans by way of Fontainebleau, where he had a long talk with Napoleon. The former prefect of the palace was now one of the strongest adherents of the Bourbons, and his most ardent desire was "to combat the return of any sentimental folly." On arriving at Orléans, Bausset also handed Marie-Louise a letter from the Emperor, in which he expressed the hope that she would join him en route for Parma, where he would leave her and their son, while he went to Elba to make preparations for their reception. But the letter of Metternich, and the comments of Bausset, destroyed the effect of the letter from Napoleon.

At this moment, also, the Empress had been much affected by the news of the robbery of her personal jewels, and of a large part of the treasure of the Crown, and she saw a sure refuge only in the dominions of her father. She therefore

welcomed with joy the arrival of Esterhazy and Lichtenstein, sent by Metternich to notify her officially of the arrangement relative to Parma, and to invite her to go to Rambouillet, where she would be met by her father.

On the evening of the 12 April, at eight o'clock, the Empress accordingly left Orléans for Rambouillet. She was informed that they had the consent of Napoleon: as a matter of fact, his permission had been asked, but there had not been time to receive his reply. As soon as he heard of this move, of which he entirely disapproved, Napoleon sent Cambronne with a detachment of the Old Guard to escort the Empress to Fontainebleau. But Cambronne, with all possible speed, did not arrive until the morning after her departure.

This same day, of the 12 April, was perhaps the saddest in the life of Napoleon. He had received for his approval the Treaty of Fontainebleau, already signed by his marshals in his name, and later had been advised by a note from Marie-Louise as well as by a letter from Méneval, that the Empress was leaving Orléans with his son. Up to that moment, he had born all his misfortunes with the greatest fortitude. He had often said that there was no circumstance in life which could justify suicide: "To abandon oneself to despair without a struggle, to commit suicide as a relief, is like leaving the field of battle before we have vanquished the enemy."

> "Yet all that poets sing, and grief hath known,
> Of hopes laid waste, knells in that word, ALONE!"

That night [1] he took a dose of poison which he had carried since the retreat from Moscow. Immediately afterwards he regretted his act, and called for assistance. His physician, Yvan, gave him an antidote which soon relieved him. In the morning he had entirely recovered his usual calm self-possession, and during the course of the day he signed the treaty.

After an all-night journey, the Empress reached Rambouillet at noon on the 13 April. During the next three days, while awaiting the arrival of her father, she was in constant com-

[1] This is the date given by Fain and Macdonald. Thiers and Constant are in error in assigning this event to the previous night. *Cf.* 2 Rose, 397.

munication with the Emperor at Fontainebleau. Much of the correspondence was over the question of money. Of the six millions which remained of the Crown funds, after the pillage, and the distribution of half a million made at Orléans, Marie-Louise sent the Emperor about two millions and a half, and, on further demand, another million. Then, through Méneval, she sent word that, on account of the needs of her father, she was forced to retain two millions, which she promised to remit him later from Vienna. But Napoleon never received this money, any more than he ever received a sou of the allowance of two millions guaranteed him under the terms of the Treaty of Fontainebleau. These funds, it should be stated, were not Crown money, but the proceeds of Napoleon's savings from his Civil list over a period of ten years. So the Allies robbed him of his money, as well as his throne and his family!

Finally, the 16 April, the Emperor Francis arrived, accompanied by Metternich. He was voluble in his excuses and explanations regarding the dethronement of his son-in-law: detained unfortunately at Chanceaux, everything at Paris had been arranged before his arrival. Without waiting a moment, he wrote the Emperor to obtain his consent for Marie-Louise to visit her family before rejoining him at Elba. In his letter he states that he has found his daughter in poor health; that she needs repose in the bosom of her family; that, restored to health, she will go to take possession of her State, which very naturally will bring her near to the residence of His Majesty. In conclusion, he says that it is unnecessary to give the assurance that his son will be treated as a member of the family, and he signs: "Your Imperial Majesty's good brother and father-in-law, FRANCIS."

This letter does not agree very well with the one written Metternich four days before, in which he said: "The important thing is to remove Napoleon to a distance from France, and, please God, may they send him very far! . . . I do not approve of the island of Elba as his residence: . . . *Napoleon remains too near to France and to Europe.*"

The intinerary of the journey of Marie-Louise was arranged the same day, but it was necessary to defer her departure until her personal effects could be packed up at Paris: her dresses, her jewels, the cradle of the King of Rome, and all his toys. Reassured by the paternal letter from his father-in-law, Napoleon raised no objections to the plans. He wrote Marie-Louise frequently during his last days at Fontainebleau, and also at every opportunity on his way to Elba. He was convinced by the letter of Francis, and by the reports of Corvisart, that only her health prevented her from rejoining him at once, and that after a *cure* at Aix she would come to Elba with his son. He realized that it would be a great proof of her attachment to exchange the Court of France for a prison, and he had no wish to constrain her. To Caulaincourt, he said: "Let her remain at Parma or Florence. . . . I will only demand of her my son." To this Marie-Louise replied by "charging the Duc de Vicence to assure Napoleon of her affection, of her constancy, of her desire to rejoin him as soon as possible, and of her resolution to bring him his son, of whom she promised to take the best possible care."

On the 23 April, the Empress went to Grosbois, where her father came to take leave of her. After resting a day, she proceeded to Vienna by way of Bâle and Zurich. Besides Mme. de Montebello she had in her suite Bausset, Corvisart, and Méneval. As soon as she crossed the Austrian frontier, her journey was a triumphal march. At Schönbrunn she was welcomed by all the members of her family "like the beautiful princess escaped from the cave of the ogre." During the six weeks that she remained at Vienna she passed all of her time in the midst of her little French Court. She received many letters from the Emperor, to which she replied promptly. She found in her grandmother, Marie-Caroline of Naples, an unexpected ally of the Emperor, who told her that she ought to rejoin her husband, even if she had to fly in disguise, for "when one is married, it is for life."

On the 8 July, she set out for Aix, whence she expected to go to Parma, and later to Elba, where the Emperor looked for her

in August. She travelled incognito under the name of the Duchesse de Colorno, but in the Imperial carriages, with her servants dressed in the Napoleonic liveries. Under the pretext that her son would worry her, he was left behind at Vienna. General Comte de Neipperg, who commanded an Austrian division at Pavia, was ordered to meet her at Aix and act as her chevalier d'honneur. Thus, by the express design of the Austrian Ministry, this man, who had frequently crossed her path, entered finally into her intimate life.

Neipperg was brought up at Paris, where his mother died in 1783. While a young officer with the Austrian troops in Belgium he was captured by the French, receiving at the time a sabre stroke which put out his right eye, over which he afterwards wore a black bandage. He served against Bonaparte in Italy in 1797 and again in 1800, and took part in all the subsequent campaigns. In 1810 he was attached to the Austrian embassy at Paris, was presented at the Tuileries, and decorated with the golden eagle of the Légion. In November of the same year he was minister to Sweden, where he employed his talents for intrigue to win the adhesion of Bernadotte to the coalition. As minister to Naples in 1813 he secured the signature of Murat to his treasonable treaty with Austria; and it was he who came to the French outposts in April 1814 to invite Eugène "to abandon a desperate cause." In his small sphere, he had contributed largely to the downfall of Napoleon, for whom he seems to have felt a profound antipathy. Notwithstanding his forty years, and his black patch, he was irresistible with the women, and had had nearly as many love affairs as Casanova.

Such was the man designated by His Holy Imperial Majesty as the guide, chevalier and companion of his dear daughter, the Archduchess-Empress! "Inside of six months," said Neipperg to his mistress on leaving Milan, "I shall be her lover and soon her husband."

At Aix, where Marie-Louise occupied the former home of Queen Hortense, she took an active part in all the gay life of the watering-place, without a thought for the disasters of France

and of the Emperor. She caused so much scandal by her conduct that Talleyrand wrote Metternich that it would be well to recall her. The Emperor Francis took the same view, and she was directed to return to Vienna without going to Parma.

After her arrival at Schönbrunn, the Emperor exacted a promise from her that she would let him see all of Napoleon's letters, and later that she would not write any without his permission. This was the end of their correspondence. Thus, little by little, the rupture was brought about.

Almost until the end of 1814, the Emperor expected her arrival at Elba, and was occupied with preparations for her reception. Under the date of the 10 August, Marie-Louise wrote him from Aix that she was commanded by her father to return to Vienna, but she assured him of her love, and promised to come later. This was the last letter he ever received from her.

During the Hundred Days, Napoleon wrote the Empress several times, and gave out the report that she was soon to rejoin him at Paris, but all this was for political effect. From the Tuileries, a week after his arrival, he wrote: "My good Louise, I am master of all France: the people and the army all display the greatest enthusiasm. . . . I expect you during the month of April. Be at Strasbourg between the 15 and 20 April." Again, on the 4 April, he said: "I am adored and master of all. I only lack you, my good Louise, and my son. Come then at once to rejoin me via Strasbourg."

As soon as the news of Napoleon's return was received at Vienna, the allied sovereigns secured from Marie-Louise a formal declaration that she was ignorant of the projects of the Emperor. By way of recompense, she was solemnly assured of the Duchy of Parma, with a revenue of twelve hundred thousand francs, but the title was for her life only, and not to pass to her son. Thereupon she declared to Méneval that she had "made an irrevocable resolution never to return to the Emperor." At this time she was the mistress of Neipperg, and wholly under his influence. If she had ever loved Napo-

leon, her love had now turned to hatred. She positively refused to receive, or reply to his letters.

On the 6 May, Méneval left Vienna and reached Paris four days later. The Emperor immediately sent for him, and questioned him for six hours. But Méneval was discreet, and did not tell all; besides, the Emperor did not wish to know all. He realized now the fatal rôle which she had played in his life, but he was too just to hold her personally responsible. In the future he always spoke of her in the kindest and most affectionate terms. In his final testament he termed her his "beloved spouse Marie-Louise," and wrote: "Up to the last moment, I have conserved for her the most tender sentiments." Just a week before his death he said to Antommarchi: "I wish you to preserve my heart in spirits, and take it to Parma, to my dear Marie-Louise. Tell her that I have tenderly loved her, that I have never ceased to love her."

With Marie-Louise, Duchess of Parma, we are not concerned. After the death of Napoleon she contracted a morganatic marriage with Neipperg, and after his death, another, with Bombelles. By the former she had, before and after their marriage, three children, a son and two daughters. She died at Parma the 17 December 1847, aged fifty-six years.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

### 1815–1832

## NAPOLEON THE SECOND

The Napoleonic Legend — The Emperor's Interest in the Future of His Son — His Prophetic Instinct — His Captivity Not the "Last Phase" — His Son Did Not Forget Him — All His French Suite Sent Home — Appearance of the Young Prince — His Portraits — No Resemblance to Napoleon — His Hereditary Taints — His Austrian Education — His Mother's Indifference — His Ignorance of Napoleon's Career — His Military Tastes — His Last Days — His Death Mask — His Tomb in the Capucins — The Inscription — Sad Fate of the Aiglon

ON THE 22 June 1815, at the palace of the Élysée in Paris, Napoleon dictated his final act of abdication. At the suggestion of his brother Lucien and Carnot he added the words:

"*My political life is finished, and I proclaim my son, under the name of Napoleon the Second, Emperor of the French.*"

This was the inception of the Napoleonic Legend.

A brilliant writer, in a work of extraordinary interest, has given us recently his "reflections" on the Legend. Professor Guérard is not an admirer of the Emperor, and his comments are frequently as vitriolic as those of Lanfrey, but he frankly admits that the "fascination of Napoleon is one of the most striking facts in history and one of the best established." When the American boys flocked to Paris after the Armistice in 1918 the first place that they all wanted to visit was the tomb of Napoleon. Professor Guérard says of the Legend:

"It is on the morrow of Waterloo that the Napoleonic Legend truly begins: a thing greater and more beautiful by far than his actual career. Granted that, beneath all his imperial bluff, there had been solid achievements, still, they were purely material, and constantly obtained at the expense of variety and initiative. The colossal may be mediocre.

STATUE OF L'AIGLON RECENTLY DISCOVERED IN HOFBURG, VIENNA

The Legend, on the contrary, has pathos, artistic significance, spiritual grandeur. It is much more than a fairy tale: it is a symbol. And if Napoleon deserves a place in the small Pantheon of supreme individualities, it is because, after 1815, he was able to forget his own record, and to collaborate, with splendid artistry, to the elaboration of his own Myth." [1]

When Napoleon made the change in the phraseology of his act of abdication, he apparently did not realize the *étendue* of the thought of Lucien and Carnot, for he said to them: "I do not see clearly what you want. They have no more use for the Regency than for me." But later, during the long voyage from Torbay to Saint Helena, he had ample time for reflection, and it was then that he began to appreciate the import of the suggestion.

At Longwood, he rarely spoke of his son, but it was evident to all that the child held the first, if not the only place in his heart. He said repeatedly: "It is better for my son that I am here; if he lives, my martyrdom will give him his crown." Such is his secret thought, and his hope: it is the only question which deeply interests him. He no longer thinks of himself. "Even if I should leave here," he says, "I should not return to France: my career is finished."

In his conversations, he often spoke of the future of France. The King could not live long: would his brother or his nephew succeed him? In his opinion, the elder branch of the Bourbons could not hold the throne for many years. Who would take it then? The Duc d'Orléans, or Napoleon the Second? After considering all the probabilities, he thought that the chances were in favor of the younger branch, of Orléans: "the dynasty would not seem to have been changed."

This sound view, more than ten years before the July Revolution, appears almost prophetic, and shows the rare political insight of the man.

When O'Meara left Saint Helena in July 1818, he wrote him: "If you see my son, embrace him for me: let him never forget that he was born a French prince." After this, for the

[1] Guérard, 98.

final three years of his life, we have but few reliable details: a silence, like that of the tomb, had fallen over his existence. Nevertheless, we are sure that he had the same hopes, the same desires, the same dreams. More and more, he was obsessed with the idea that his martyrdom would assure the throne to his son. To him, he left, in his writings, the explanation of his career and of his politics. To him, he willed those articles which were most personal to himself: his toilet sets, his arms, his porcelains, his books with the Imperial arms. His thought was summed up in the phrase: "My recollection will be the glory of his life."

Many historians seem to regard the captivity of Napoleon as the "last phase" of his career, and nothing more. They overlook the constructive work of the Emperor during the years spent at Saint Helena, and its immense service to the Tradition. This barren rock in the South Atlantic was the scene not merely of the death of Napoleon, but of the birth of the Napoleonic Legend.

During the six years that he passed at Saint Helena, Napoleon received no direct news from his wife or child. If Marie-Louise did not care to write him, that was her affair, but there can be no excuse for the deliberate cruelty of the English Government in depriving the Emperor of all news of his son. To the torment of his captivity was added the agony of uncertainty regarding the existence of his child.

At Vienna, the little King of Rome was never allowed to hear the name of his father, but he never forgot him. When Méneval returned to France, he called to see the boy before leaving Vienna, and asked him if he had any message for his father. In the presence of his governess the child made no reply, but as Méneval was leaving, the little King drew him to one side, and whispered in his ear: "Monsieur *Meva*, you will tell him that I always love him much." This was a year after his arrival at Vienna, when he was four years old.

One by one all his French attendants were sent home, until no one was left except Mme. Marchand, his nurse, who had

been with him since the day of his birth. She was only a common peasant woman, but she was much attached to the child, and he loved her dearly. She was humble and faithful, with a true maternal heart, and really the only mother he had ever known. She was the only one who could talk to him of his father: the one remaining link with the land of his birth. Her son was the faithful valet of Napoleon at Saint Helena, and through him she managed to send the Emperor a lock of the hair of the little King. On the 27 February 1816, she put the child to bed as usual, sat by his side until he went to sleep, and then, by orders of the Austrian Government, took her departure for France. When the boy awoke in the morning, and found her gone, he understood at once. He made no outcry or complaint, and when the Austrian valet, who took her place, entered his room, he simply said: "Foresti, I would like to get up."

What was the appearance of this son of Napoleon, the second emperor of a dynasty which at his birth dominated more than half of Europe? In his physique he was an Austrian, a prince of the House of Lorraine. As he grew older he bore a striking resemblance to his mother, who was the image of Francis the First: the same shape of the head, the same high forehead, the same eyes, nose, mouth, and chin. In his baby pictures, painted in France, there was a strong resemblance to his father, but in all those executed at Vienna, which are probably truer to nature, he is the living portrait of his mother. In the dozen pictures painted between 1821 and 1831, the last ten years of his life, the resemblance to Marie-Louise is so marked that no discussion is possible.

One of the most interesting of these numerous portraits is the water-color of 1831 in the Albertina at Vienna. He is seated in an armchair, over the back of which is thrown a fur pelisse. The future Emperor Francis-Joseph is upon his knees, and the Princesse Caroline de Salerno is standing by his side. His eyes are a bright blue, his mouth a bow, his blond hair dressed à la Chateaubriand. He wears a flea-colored coat,

with a large black velvet collar, a nankin waistcoat, a fine shirt with three jewelled buttons, and pearl-gray trousers.

It is useless to claim that all these artists had accentuated his Austrian traits, as the earlier French painters made him a miniature Napoleon. His aunt, Caroline Murat, who certainly did not love Marie-Louise, attested that these portraits were true to life. Besides, we have the mask made after death, which will be referred to later.

To Napoleon, he bore not the slightest resemblance, either in form or features. He was very tall, six feet one inch, English measure, while Napoleon was of medium height, about five feet six. His hair was blond and wavy, that of Napoleon, dark brown and straight; his head was narrow and pointed, that of his father, large and beautifully formed; his chest was narrow and poorly developed, that of Napoleon, deep and large. Napoleon's eyes were blue-gray, those of his son, a bright blue, and prominent, as in the case of the mother; his complexion was clear and rosy; that of the Emperor, the color of ivory.

The Bonapartes were of pure blood, with no hereditary taints, aside from a tendency to cancer, of which Napoleon and three other members of his family died. In the generation of Napoleon, as well as the following one, the average length of life was over sixty years: all of the males had children, and none of the women was barren.

In the House of Austria, of the same degree as Marie-Louise, out of thirteen children, three died idiots, and five under the age of five years; of the others, the average of life was only forty-four years, and only four left children. The record of preceding generations was equally bad. Of the sixteen children of Maria Theresa, ten died in childhood, two before they were thirty, while only four, of whom two were idiots, reached the age of sixty. It is evident that eugenics were little understood in the time of Napoleon or he never would have selected an Austrian Archduchess to be the mother of his son! His child was a Naples Bourbon, with a heritage of idiocy or of tuberculosis: he was condemned before his birth.

In his intelligence, and intellectual development, it is almost impossible to say whether the son took after his father. He was only three years old when taken from France, and every effort was made to mould him in the Austrian form, to destroy in him everything which was French. He was educated as a Habsburg prince, he wore Austrian uniforms and decorations; he was called Francis instead of Napoleon; and, in place of his royal title of King of Rome, he was known as the Duke of Reichstadt. He was taught in German, and almost forgot his native language, which he never spoke or wrote well. Every effort was made to blot out the memory of his father, and it was years before he knew anything about the career of the Emperor.

From his earliest years, he was abandoned by his mother, who was living at Parma in open concubinage with Neipperg, and naturally did not care to have her innocent little boy around her. She took no interest in his education, or his mode of life. She encouraged him, in the innocence of his heart, to correspond with her lover, who posed as his mentor and friend. From some of his later letters it is evident that he was familiar with the *Mémoires* dictated at Saint Helena; also with the testament, in which his father wrote: "I enjoin upon my son never to forget that he was born a French prince . . . He should adopt my motto: *Tout pour le peuple français.*"

His ignorance, even in the later years of his life, of his father's glorious career, is revealed in a letter of November 1828 to Neipperg, in which he finds some "analogy" between the fate of Mack, recently deceased, and that of Napoleon. What a parallel! Mack, who surrendered at Ulm, placed almost upon an equal plane with the Great Emperor, who received his sword! He must also have known of the treason of Marmont, but he so little appreciated the baseness of the marshal's act that he welcomed him, not only as a military instructor, but also as a friend, to whom he became much attached.

He knew that Napoleon had been a great general, and to imitate him he developed a great taste for parades and reviews.

He had seen the portraits of his father on his white Arabians, so he wished to become a finished horseman. With his delicate frame, in which the seeds of consumption were already planted, his exposure in all kinds of weather, and the violent exercise he took, all hastened his end.

At the beginning of 1829, his malady was diagnosed, and he knew it. He was forbidden to take any violent exercise, or even to dance, but it was difficult to control him. In July 1830, a consultation of physicians was held, and the Duke was warned that only the greatest care, in a favorable climate, could prolong his days. But in May 1832, after being named colonel en second of a regiment, he took part in all the army manœuvres, and even in horse-races. Two months later, on the 22 July, he passed away at the château of Schönbrunn near Vienna.

After the Great War, a hitherto unknown monument of Napoleon the Second was discovered in the attic of the Hofburg at Vienna: it was a death-mask in plaster, placed upon a sculptured bust of life-size. The beautiful face, with its lines of suffering, was well worth a resurrection. The frail form is outlined under the light covering with its golden border; the pitiful chest appears through the fine shirt, with its large open collar: the whole effect is of sleep rather than of death. The sculptor who modelled this chef-d'œuvre is unknown to fame.

The tomb of the Duke of Reichstadt, in the chapel of the Capucins, is familiar to all visitors to Vienna, but until the fall of the Empire permission was never given to photograph the bronze casket in which sleeps the son of the Eagle. The bright rays of the electric light now profane the shadowy chamber in which the tombs are assembled, like the members of a royal family who give an audience. At the foot of the casket of his grandfather, beside that which contains the ashes of his mother, is placed the tomb of the Aiglon. Along the top is a bronze palm in high relief: on each side there are three lions' heads, with rings in their jaws.

The tomb has never been opened since his death, but we

SARCOPHAGUS OF DUC DE REICHSTADT IN CHAPEL IN VIENNA

know that the embalmed body is attired in an Austrian uniform: a white coat, blue breeches embroidered with silver, and black morocco riding-boots with golden spurs. On the breast are the orders of Austria and Hungary, and a small star of the Légion d'honneur with a red ribbon, placed, but not attached, upon the left side of this breast which had received in its cradle the grand cordon of the Order.

But the casket does not contain all the mortal remains of this poor body, for the viscera and the heart are elsewhere. "Before the funeral," reads the official report, "the officers of the prince carried the silver urn which contained the viscera to the vaults of the Cathedral of Saint-Stephen. The same day, the heart, enclosed in a box of silver gilt, was deposited in the Church of the Augustins, near the mausoleum of Marie-Christine, the handiwork of Canova."

It has been said, and repeated again and again, that the Court of Austria, in all its official acts, never allowed the name of the Emperor Napoleon to appear, but the refutation is to be found here. The inscription reads.

*Fils de Napoléon, empereur des Français*
*Salué dès son berceau du nom de roi de Rome*

Here, in the gloomy vault of the Capucins, far from the splendid tomb of his father under the gilded dome of the Invalides, sleeps for all time the poor young Aiglon, "whose wings fluttered but a moment, only to be bruised against the bars of fate, and folded silently in resignation and death."

*Et maintenant il faut que Ton Altesse dorme,*
*Dorme, au fond du caveau, dans la double prison*
*De son cercueil de bronze et de cet uniforme.*

. . . . . .

*Dors! mais rêve en dormant que l'on t'a fait revivre,*
*Et que, laissant ton corps dans son cercueil de cuivre,*
*J'ai pu voler ton cœur dans son urne d'argent.*

Rostand — *L'Aiglon.*

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*An asterisk is affixed to the names of his Marshals*

*Augereau, Duc de Castiglione.
*Bernadotte, Prince de Ponte Corvo.
*Berthier, Chief of Staff; Prince de Neuchâtel, Prince de Wagram.
*Bessières, Duc d'Istrie; Commander of the Old Guard.
Bonaparte, Joseph (King of Naples), King of Spain.
Bonaparte, Louis, King of Holland.
Bonaparte, Jérôme, King of Westphalia.
*Brune, Comte.
Cambacérès, Arch-Chancellor; Duc de Parme.
Caulaincourt, Duc de Vicence; Master of Horse; Minister of Foreign Affairs (1814).
Champagny, Duc de Cadore; Minister of Foreign Affairs (1807–1811)
Chaptal, Minister of the Interior; Comte de Chanteloup.
Clarke, Minister of War; Duc de Feltre.
*Davout, Duc d'Auerstädt, Prince d'Eckmühl.
Drouet, Comte d'Erlon.
Duroc, Grand Marshal of the Palace; Duc de Friule.
Eugène (Beauharnais), Viceroy of Italy.
Fesch (Cardinal), Grand Almoner.
Fouché, Minister of Police (1804–1810); Duc d'Otrante.
*Grouchy, Comte.
*Jourdan, Comte.
Junot, Duc d'Abrantès.
*Kellermann, Duc de Valmy.
*Lannes, Duc de Montebello.
Lavalette, Comte; Minister of Posts.
Lebrun, Duc de Plaisance.
*Lefebvre, Duc de Dantzig.
*Macdonald, Duc de Tarante.
Maret, Minister of Foreign Affairs (1811–1814); Duc de Bassano.
*Marmont, Duc de Raguse.
*Masséna, Duc de Rivoli; Prince d'Essling.
Mollien, Comte; Minister of the Treasury.
*Moncey, Duc de Conegliano.
*Mortier, Duc de Trévise.
Mouton, Comte de Lobau.
*Murat (Grand Duc de Berg); King of Naples.
*Ney, Duc d'Elchingen; Prince de la Moskova.
*Oudinot, Duc de Reggio.
Pasquier, Duc de; Prefect of Police.
Savary, Duc de Rovigo; Minister of Police (1810–1814).
*Sérurier, Comte.
*Soult, Duc de Dalmatie.
*Saint-Cyr, Marquis de.
*Suchet, Duc d'Albuféra.
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